

SEX AND THE HOSTILE WORKPLACE

July 10 - 23, 1995

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Corporate robbery on the
information superhighway

BY ROBERT W. MCCESNEY

EDITORIAL

AMERICANS SUPPORT THE MILITIA'S DEVIL

After the United Nations was founded at the end of World War II, the idea of participating in an international organization as nominal equals with the Communist devil enraged right-wingers. For two decades the John Birch Society, the Cold War granddaddy of today's paranoid right, blighted the Western and Southern states, where it recruited most heavily, with billboards demanding that the United States get out of the U.N. And now, 50 years after its founding, the U.N. still haunts right-wing groups. Like John Birchers obsessed with an imagined invasion by Russian—or Chinese—troops, militia members today accuse Washington of planning to have the U.N. take over the United States and destroy our constitutional government.

But paranoid right-wingers are not the only ones who seem to distrust the U.N. Indeed, those whose understanding of our society is formed by the commercial media might well assume that a majority of Americans share such views. Reading the papers and watching TV, one might suppose that most Americans not only feel that we are giving too much of our money to the U.N. but also that we should go it alone without being hamstrung by an organization of foreigners that places limitations on our status and freedom of action in international affairs.

This, indeed, is what some militia members feel. As Mike McKinzey, a self-proclaimed lieutenant in Missouri's 51st Militia, told Rebecca Shelton of the *Kansas City New Times*, the U.N. is taking over the country "inch by inch." For example, McKinzey was bothered recently when a U.S. helicopter pilot serving as part of the U.N. force in Korea was shot down by North Korean troops. What troubled McKinzey was the return of the pilot's body with a U.N. flag draped over his coffin. He also complained about the U.N. flag flying over the Truman Library; other members of the 51st Militia were disturbed when they saw the U.N. flag with American troops in Haiti.

These men believe that "nothing's going right" in the

country. Crime is rampant, they say, yet guns are being taken away from law-abiding citizens. They believe that welfare is bankrupting the country. And they work hard to pay taxes only to see \$20 billion sent to bail out Mexico. All these incidents remind McKinzey of his growing marginality and insecurity. "I'm tired of caring," he says. "I want to make my house payment and I'm not ashamed to say it ... I could care less about Mexico."

And yet, surprising as it may seem, the U.N. has strong support from the American people, especially when they are told the truth about our participation. This was verified in a poll two months ago by the Center for International and Security Studies at the University of Maryland. Some two-thirds of

those polled support U.N. peacekeeping in principle, believe we should pay U.N. peacekeeping dues in full and support most peacekeeping operations. They not only approve contributing troops to U.N. peacekeeping, but significantly more than two-thirds approve of having them serve under a foreign U.N. commander if other nations have contributed more troops than has the United States.

And while 60 percent say that the United States is giving more than its share of troops to the U.N., that belief is based on ignorance of just how many we actually contribute. The median estimate of U.S. troop contribution among those polled was 40 percent. The median suggestion of an appropriate level was 30 percent. The actual level of U.S. contribution is only 4 percent.

Similarly, 58 percent of those polled said that the United States is paying too much in dues to the U.N. But respondents offered a median estimate that 22 percent of the U.S. military budget goes to U.N. peacekeeping, and their median estimate of what was appropriate was 15 percent. The actual contribution is 1 percent. When told this, disapproval of the U.S. contribution among respondents dropped to 18 percent.

Interestingly, a majority of Americans supported the U.S. role in the restoration of President Aristide to power in Haiti and in the U.N. delivery of humanitarian aid to Somalia, though not the subsequent participation in the civil war there. And an overwhelming majority also said the U.N. should have intervened in Rwanda to stop the large-scale killings there.

Overall, it seems clear that when Americans are relatively well-informed they support democratic principles and humanitarian action. But it is also clear that, despite this being called the communications age, the commercial media keep Americans in a state of ignorance about the routine operations of our government. That's not really news, but it does help explain why movements like the militias have such an easy time recruiting frustrated and increasingly insecure citizens.

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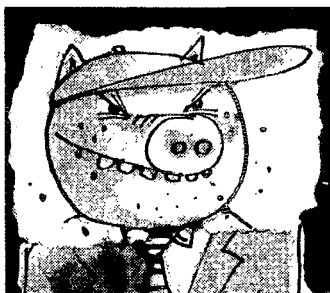
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LETTERS

Torricelli &
Bianca I

Just what the hell is the point of Peter Zirnite's snippy "Torricelli's Turnaround" (*ITT*, May 14)? Here's a U.S. Congressman who goes to considerable risk to call attention to the complicity of the U.S. government in the murders in Guatemala of an American citizen as well as the husband of an American, and all Zirnite can do is cast a cynical aspersions on the Congressman's "real" motives. My, what a keen sense of historical perspective Zirnite possesses to draw the conclusion that the "more perplexing" question is what motivated Congressman Torricelli to go public: Was he led around by Bianca Jagger? Was it Machiavellian designs? How can anyone take *ITT* seriously when it allows such small-mindedness to appear in its pages?

Peter Signorelli
Mt. Tabor, N.J.

Torricelli &
Bianca II

Although I was very pleased with New Jersey Rep. Robert Torricelli's exposure of the CIA in Guatemala, I must admit that like Peter Zirnite's anonymous House staffer, I have always seen Torricelli—who also supports Miami's Cuban lobby as well as the Irish Republican Army (IRA)—as sleazy. I, too, concluded that the key to his "conversion" was Bianca Jagger. But the politics of their relationship works both ways. Jagger, who is a member of the board of Amnesty International, along with Torricelli attended an April fund-raising event for the IRA's political party, Sinn Fein.

A few years ago, Amnesty amended its charter to recognize that non-state agencies—the IRA, PLO, etc.—can be major human rights violators as well as state forces. Perhaps Jagger missed that meeting? The IRA (most thankfully) is into its eighth month of a ceasefire, but remains adamant in refusing

to "decommission" its weapons unless Britain will negotiate a military withdrawal from Ulster.

More important for an Amnesty Board member, the IRA and the "loyalist" paramilitaries continue to use violence in "their own" neighborhoods against "anti-social elements" and political dissidents.

On May 10, a \$1,000-a-plate affair was held for Gerry Adams at New York's Plaza Hotel. Back in the '80s, when Sinn Fein was in its "leftist mode," they needled their larger rival Catholic nationalist part, the SDLP, for taking money from the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy. SDLP was embarrassed and gave up their "Washington gold." Now Sinn Fein is the wealthiest party in Ulster thanks to the New York glitterati.

Robert St-Cyr
Greenlawn, N.Y.

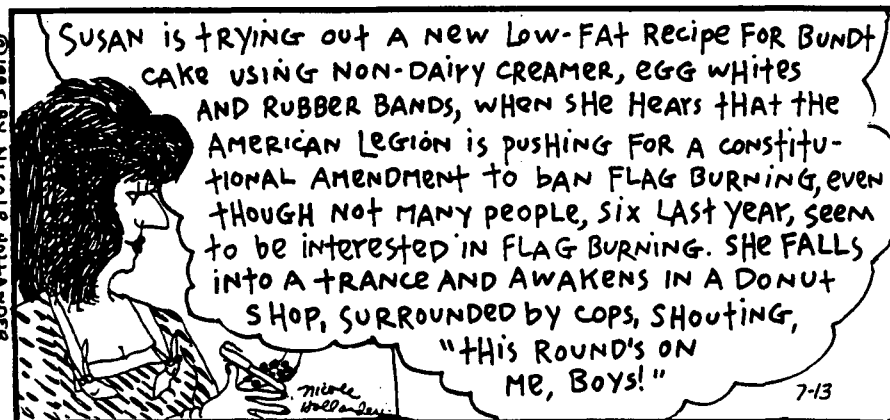
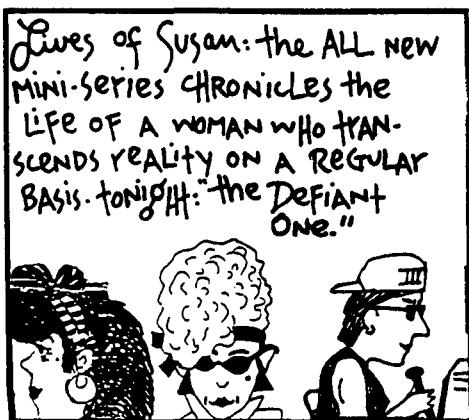
"Revisionism"

In his review of *In Retrospect* by Robert McNamara, Terry Anderson complains that McNamara offers little documentation for his contention that Kennedy Administration officials began planning for the phased withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam in 1963.

Maybe it's time for Professor Anderson to update his collection of history books. If he had read *JFK and Vietnam* by John Newman, which is

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



based largely on some 15,000 government documents recently declassified under the Freedom of Information Act, Anderson would not require further documentation of that fact.

About one month before he was assassinated, Kennedy issued National Security Action Memorandum 263, which ordered the withdrawal of 1,000 U.S. military advisers from Vietnam by the end of 1963. Two days after Kennedy's assassination, President Johnson signed NSAM 273, which canceled the troop withdrawal. But Anderson would probably dismiss these facts as more "Vietnam revisionism."

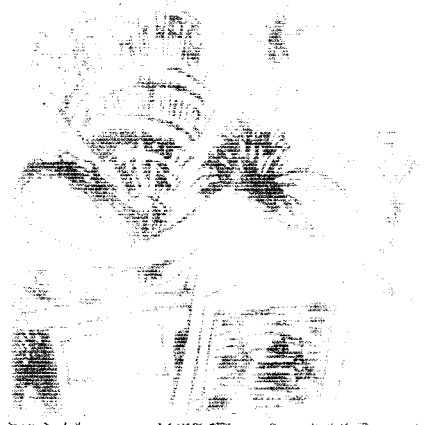
Speaking of revision, Anderson's analysis of the Bay of Pigs fiasco could use some. Far from going along with the CIA-hatched invasion scheme he inherited from the Eisenhower Administration, Kennedy incurred the wrath of the CIA and the Cuban exile community by refusing to authorize the air strikes the CIA wanted. He eventually fired CIA Director Allen Dulles, but Dulles had the last laugh when LBJ appointed him to the Warren Commission, which concluded there was no conspiracy involved in the JFK assassination.

Matthew J. Beal
South Bend, Indiana

Bias and ignorance

In his review of Robert McNamara's *In Retrospect*, Terry Anderson exhibits the bias and ignorance so common among liberal historians who study John Kennedy's Vietnam policy. As early as 1961 Kennedy's military advisers were telling him that nothing short of several American combat divisions could save South Vietnam. Instead of sending combat troops Kennedy agreed to substantially increase the number of American advisers. Time and again, the same men who would later advise Johnson to send troops advised Kennedy to do so, but Kennedy never wavered in refusing. This is a documented fact that most historians ignore.

One cannot assume as Anderson does, that once advisers were intro-



duced that ground combat units simply represented the next rung on the ladder of escalation. There is a major distinction between a policy of advising the South Vietnamese army on how to fight a war and a policy using American soldiers to fight the war. The difference is not subtle, and to construe a large increase in advisers as something only a little different than tens of thousands of ground forces is just nonsense.

Therefore, based on Kennedy's past behavior it is very reasonable for McNamara to argue that his former boss would have followed through. Kennedy was certainly an avid Cold Warrior. But he was also a very pragmatic politician who was concerned about the political fallout of any protracted military campaign that did not have clearly defined objectives.

Steve Jones
Landisville, PA

Terry Anderson replies: In 1988, after countless Missing in Action and Rambo movies, a poll found that 82 percent of Americans believed that Vietnam still held live U.S. prisoners of war, a contention dismissed by the U.S. Defense Department in 1981. And after Oliver Stone's film *JFK*, a vast number of people seem convinced that the charismatic leader would have gotten us out of Vietnam in 1964.

Many books and documents do

demonstrate that by the summer of 1963 Kennedy thought South Vietnam was "a mess," one reason for his approval of the coup d'etat against President Diem. Kennedy did have second thoughts about the conflict, and that has been noted by many of his advisers, including McNamara, Roger Hilsman, John McNaughton, and others. But, as I wrote in my review of *In Retrospect*, the former Secretary of Defense fails to supply a single document supporting the contention that Kennedy approved a plan to quit South Vietnam after the election of November 1964.

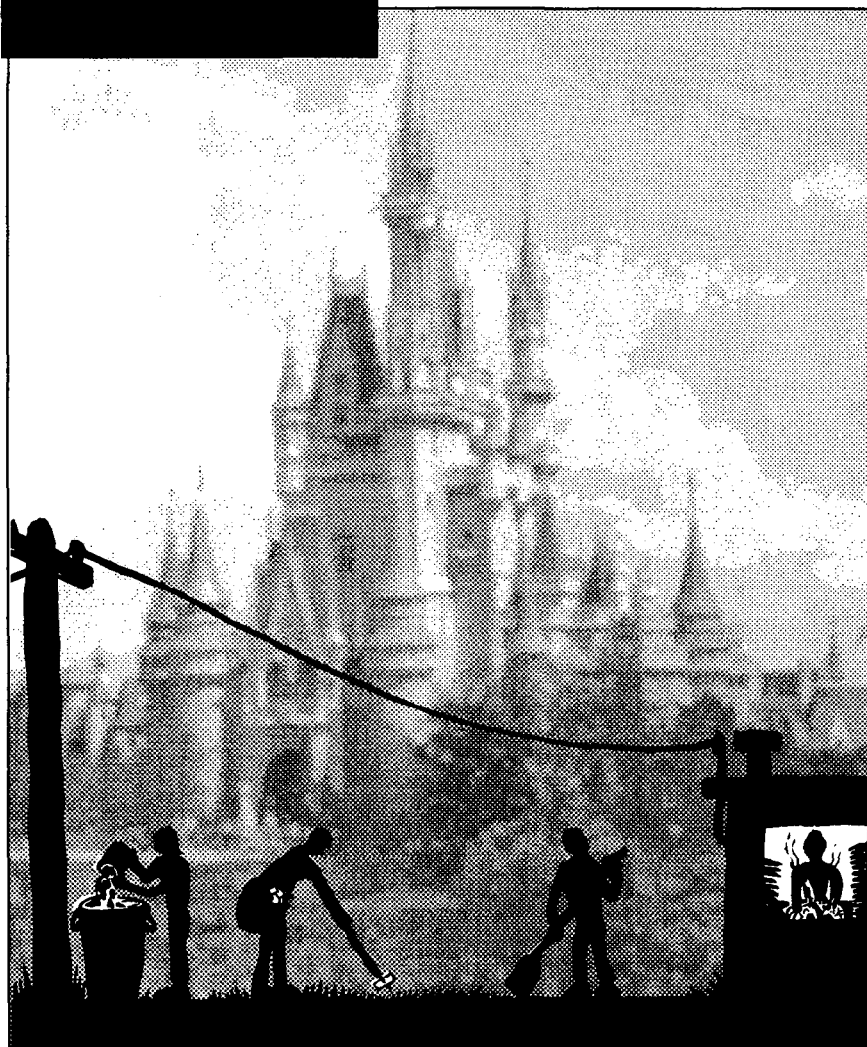
Regardless of what JFK intended to do, ask yourself: Why would he approve such a plan one full year before he hoped to be re-elected? What would the political ramifications have been if such a plan had been leaked to the press? In fact, no one, including Kennedy, knew what to do in South Vietnam, and in such situations advisers routinely write up various contingency plans while the administration explains its honorable intentions before the media.

I don't know if such an explanation reveals my "bias and ignorance" or proves I'm a "liberal historian," but the fact remains that President Kennedy escalated U.S. involvement in South Vietnam. When Lyndon Johnson became president, his press secretary, George Reedy, wrote that LBJ increased troop strength because he held the same Cold War ideas as JFK, and because "Johnson acted the way he thought that Kennedy would have acted."

Clarification

In "The second city's 'second ghetto,'" (ITT, June 26) J.S. Fuerst's support for preserving and expanding public housing in predominantly black neighborhoods should not be construed as opposition to public housing in predominantly white neighborhoods. He favors more moderate-scale housing projects wherever feasible.

InSHORT



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DIRTY POOLS

Every morning before sunrise, unmarked vans pull up in front of the Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida shelter in downtown Orlando to shuttle homeless men to the city's dozen or so labor pools. There the men will sit, waiting, hoping they will be chosen for temporary day labor by a local business. If they're lucky, they might land a temporary job picking up and recycling trash, washing dishes, preparing food or working construction at one of Orlando's major theme parks.

Homeless temps subcontracted to Walt Disney World, Universal Studios or



Unfriendly skies

According to a recent report in the *Washington Post*, there have been more than a dozen major accidents involving U.S. military planes in the last year, and officials have not exactly been forthcoming



about all the details. We can see why. In one incident, two Navy pilots and a navigator

removed their clothes—and their oxygen masks—in an attempt to “moon” a neighboring plane, then passed out and crashed their aircraft. In another, a pilot apparently let his wife (on board as part of a “spousal orientation” program) take the helm of his Air Force transport plane, which she then crashed.

Happy happy joy joy

Communist Party officials in Shanghai have decided on a new slogan for their city: “Don’t Worry, Be Happy.” The officials are convinced the perky new motto, based on Bobby McFerrin’s 1988 hit



song, will help residents focus on the positive and will aid in the fight against corruption,

the *San Francisco Examiner* reports. "Whether people are happy and relaxed is the ultimate indication of the success and spirit of the government," the *Shanghai Liberation Daily* explained. No word yet on whether or not the government of Singapore is considering making "Beat it" their slogan.

Thigh master

Congressman and extremely-long-shot Republican presidential candidate Robert K. Dornan (R-CA) is known for his flamboyantly nasty invective, describing President Clinton as "a sleazeball who can't keep his pants on" and dismissing political opponents as "lesbian spear chuckers." In a recent interview, he traced his present



obsession with the evils of homosexuality back to his teenage years. "Remember I

grew up in New York and Beverly Hills," he told the *Raleigh News and Observer*, noting that he had been regularly propositioned while making his way to the Jesuit high school he attended in West Los Angeles. "Oh, I've been hit on," he explained. "And always the same ridiculous line: 'Boy, you have nice thighs.' "

APPALL-O-METER SCALE

1. Models Inc.-redible!
2. Infomercial Irritating
3. Plausibly deniable
4. L.A.P.D. blue
5. Bob Dole-icious
6. Raoul Cédras-tic
7. Ollie North nasty
8. Molliday in Rwanda
9. Zhirinovskyesque
10. Where have you gone, Joe Goebbels?

Sea World nominally earn the minimum wage (without benefits, of course), but in reality they earn much less. From that \$4.25 per hour, labor pools typically deduct the cost of transportation, uniforms, meals, tools, and safety equipment—and those that provide housing charge a nightly fee—cutting deeply into the laborer's real wage and often forcing them into debt.

"It's slavery," says Mervyn Cordner, a workers' rights advocate at the Greater Orlando Area Legal Services. It is unclear how many such laborers local theme parks employ, but Cordner estimates that hundreds work at Disney. "I have people from the shelter tell me they've been working at Disney for six years. They've been shipped all around the Disney program. They work in every section, and they are not permanent."

Cordner's clients commonly complain of unscrupulous and devious treatment from the pools. Some homeless workers engaged to rake lawns have found themselves shoveling sewage. Others have been left behind at job sites such as Walt Disney World, 20 miles from Orlando, with no transportation back to their shelters.

On June 16, the Florida Legislature passed the Labor Pool Act to prevent such abuses. The law also forbids charging workers for uniforms, tools or safety equipment, and it imposes a reasonable cap on transportation deductions. Pools must also provide water, bathrooms and seating for workers, and pay them in cash or check instead of vouchers. Unfortunately, the bill provides for no state oversight or regulation, leaving litigation as the only recourse for homeless workers unfairly treated by their employers.

Currently only Texas and Georgia have regulations protecting day laborers, and they remain all but unprotected by federal labor law. In 1971, a National Day Labor Protection Act was introduced in Congress but failed to get out of committee. That bill, similar in most respects to Florida's new law, would additionally have required labor pools to be licensed, in effect bringing them under regulatory oversight of federal agencies.

—Bill George

SLAPP STICK

Criticize a polluter, go to court. That's the lesson that NuMex, a waste handler that operates a landfill and used to run a medical waste incinerator in Sunland, N.M., would like to impress on the Sierra Club and two of its local affiliates, the Southwest Organizing Project and SWOP organizers Louis Head and Richard Moore. In New Mexico's first SLAPP—or, strategic lawsuit against public participation—the company has filed a libel suit in response to a mildly worded paragraph composed by Head and Moore in *Unequal Justice*, an anthology of essays on environmental racism published by Sierra Club Books.

The offending paragraph states that Sunland Park residents "have been subjected to poisonous air emissions from a medical waste incinerator located only 200 yards from local elementary schools. The company took advantage of an unorganized community of Mexican immigrants to place both the incinerator and a regional landfill that accepts waste from several states and *maquiladora* industries along the Mexican border."

NuMex claims that: 1) The community of Sunland Park is not "unorganized"; 2) "poisonous air emissions" do not exist, nor did emissions ever pose danger to any resident; 3) the authors write in present tense about such emissions; and 4) 200 yards is a "coarse misstatement" of the actual distance

between the school and the dumpsite.

While at least one fact presented in the book—the exact distance between the landfill and a neighboring school—appears to be inaccurate, the more important claims are indisputable: NuMex began operating its Sunland Park landfill in 1987. The following year, the company began burning medical waste in an incinerator built on the same site by Medical Compliance Services. Both the landfill and the incinerator operated without a permit.

By 1990, when NuMex applied to the New Mexico Environmental Department for permits, Sunland Park's residents—mostly low-income Mexican-Americans—were concerned for their safety. With the assistance of SWOP, they formed Concerned Citizens of Sunland Park to block the permits. After multiple investigations, heated protests and protracted hearings, the state Environmental Department confirmed the presence of dioxins, furans and hydrochloride emissions from the incinerator in quantities large enough to present an "imminent health hazard" and in December 1991 ordered NuMex to shut it down.

If the SLAPP is successful, NuMex could discredit the middle-class environmentalists represented by the Sierra Club and the savvy SWOP organizers who've been successful at putting stories of environmental racism on the front page. But environmental lawyers familiar with the suit give NuMex little chance of winning the suit. NuMex lawyers would have to convince a jury that the information in the book is absolutely false, that the authors intentionally misrepresented the facts and that the company suffered significant financial losses directly attributable to misrepresentations in the book.

But NuMex can win even if it loses. SLAPPs often deal lethal blows to community organizers: The mere threat of a costly lawsuit can suffice to intimidate protest. The suit may be a preemptive strike in what promises to be a bitter struggle over the permit renewal for NuMex's landfill, scheduled for November 1996.

—Nan Elsasser

DEATH BY DELAY

One week before the Connecticut Legislature ended this year's session in early June, the campaign finance reform bill known as NB 6848 began to get dolled up in its party clothes. Initially a pipe-dream of statewide grassroots organizations, the bill had made it through four wearying committee reviews over the last year. It was finally ready to hit the floor for some solid debate and, with any luck, a victory celebration. All it needed, say supporters, was an escort. The escort never showed. Although supporters claim that they had rounded up a majority of favorable votes, legislative leadership—Democratic in the state House and Republican in the Senate—refused to bring the bill to a vote. On June 7, the bill died as the legislative session drew to a close for summer.

The alternative financing bill, which applied only to the governor's race, would have limited campaign contributions to \$250 per person, a sharp drop from the current \$2,500 limit for individuals and \$5,000 for political action committees. Any candidate able to raise \$100,000 in small donations would have become eligible for up to \$1.5 million from a "citizen's election account,"

MEDIA WATCH

By Jennifer Gonnerman

Women scorned

From watching television news and reading the papers, you would think that angry white men are this country's most powerful political force. But the media has missed a much more important story: the role that millions of angry women are playing in American politics. Women voters played a decisive role in the last two elections, and women are poised to play a major role in the country's growing debate over affirmative action.

Many more male voters than expected flocked to the GOP last November, but still more women voters stayed away from the polls altogether. Women made up 51 percent of the electorate in 1992—down from 54 percent in the 1992 campaign. For the Democrats—who have long relied on a larger female turnout—this meant defeat. Women's votes had delivered victory to Bill Clinton in 1992. Among Clinton voters, women made up 55 percent.

The press has displayed only minimal interest in the reasons for the recent defection of women from the voting rolls, while reporting obsessively on the psychology of the "angry white man." The *New York Times*, for example, recently ran a piece on the politics of racial preference under the headline, "Affirmative Action: The Race to Win Over the Angry White Male."

But an April Harris poll commissioned by the Feminist Majority Foundation pointed up the shortcomings of this view. The poll surveyed 1,364 adults and found that employed women were far more angry than their male

counterparts. This suggests that gender may be the greatest gap in coverage of the affirmative action debate. Only 57 percent of women said they are satisfied with their chances of getting promoted, as compared with similarly qualified men. Contrary to the perception in the mainstream press, 81 percent of men reported that they were satisfied with their prospects for promotion, as compared with women candidates. "Men are not worried about being discriminated against," says Colleen Dermody of the Feminist Majority Foundation. "So where did this idea of the angry white men come from? They are certainly not the majority."

These findings have not trickled into most media coverage of the affirmative debate. (They did receive passing mention in *The Detroit News*, the *Washington Post* and the *Chicago Tribune*.) Part of this neglect is doubtless due to the Oklahoma City bombing, which occurred as the results of the Harris poll became public. But the media has long paid scant attention to women voters and their concerns. In mid-June, Harris and Eleanor Smeal, head of Feminist Majority, met with reporters from the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times* to underscore the importance of the poll's findings in the affirmative action debate. In any event, Democratic party leaders will ignore women's voices at their peril. According to Democratic pollster Celinda Lake, "For most of the last 15 years, the Democrats would have been a permanent minority party without the support of women."

which would have been fed by voluntary contributions made through a check-off box on state income tax returns. The bill would have taken effect in 2002.

In Connecticut, which has one of the highest per capita incomes of any state in the nation as well as three of the poorest and most violent cities, the death of this bill means that candidates for governor will remain indebted to rich suburban enclaves like Greenwich while virtually ignoring the voices of the state's urban population. In last year's gubernatorial election, victorious GOP candidate John Rowland outspent his opponents by a margin of nearly 2-1, setting a state record with his \$4.1 million in campaign contributions, mostly from wealthy individuals and corporate donors.

Many Republican legislators doubted the bill's chances for survival. They didn't believe that the voluntary contributions outlined in the bill would yield enough money to fund a campaign, nor did they think that public financing offered candidates ample room for "free speech." And although Rowland publicly supported finance reform during his 1994 campaign, he cooled on the issue once he gained office. He explicitly opposed the bill in its original form, in which taxpayers could choose to divert two or three of their tax dollars to the public campaign fund by simply checking a box on their tax return. Like many other Republicans, Rowland objected to spending tax money on individual campaigns. So the bill's sponsors made some hasty changes. No longer would the check-off box divert tax money, rather it would remain on the forms as an option for anyone who wanted to contribute voluntarily.

But even that wasn't enough for candidates who wanted easy money and a limited playing field, says Donna Becotte, director of the Connecticut Money & Politics Project, a campaign-finance reform organization. "Legislative leadership is scared of changing to a system where easy money is not there, where they have to meet a threshold, where [they say] 'I'm going to have to account for every dollar that I spend.' They're scared to say it's not going to be a race of money, it's going to be a race of wits and will."

—Beverly Gage

ROUGH CUTS

By JA Reid





NUCLEAR WAR

*Sex researcher Shere Hite
reinterprets traditional
"family values"*

planning to picket the Olivetti headquarters to protest the ad campaign's sexism. Hite went to the meeting and decided to join NOW's efforts. "I knew that I'd found the right place to be, because neither in Columbia nor in the modeling agency were people debating the kinds of ideas I was interested in."

Shere Hite, who had been born and raised in St. Joseph, Missouri, went on to research and write feminist analyses of sexuality, gender roles and the family structure. Her most recent study is *The Hite Report on the Family: Growing Up Under Patriarchy*, published by Grove this April. In all, her books have sold more than 20 million copies in over 30 countries. In her 1976 bestseller, *The Hite Report: A Nationwide Study of Female Sexuality*, Hite declared that, contrary to conventional wisdom, women had rich fantasy lives, but their sexual and emotional ones were weak. Her most controversial finding was that 70 percent of her respondents failed to achieve orgasm without clitoral stimulation.

The Hite Report became a runaway bestseller—2.5 million paperback copies were printed in the States alone—and Hite's name was suddenly on everyone's lips. *Newsweek* chose Hite as one of the "most outstanding people of 1976" and the 1978 *World Almanac* listed her as one of the 25 most influ-

In 1970, Shere Hite was studying history in the doctoral program at Columbia when she encountered a familiar problem: She ran out of money. "I had to do something," she explains. Hite became a model, taking a leave of absence from Columbia. One of her assignments was to appear in a television commercial for Olivetti typewriters. "I thought I got it because I typed really fast," she recalls. As the all-male crew was preparing for the shoot, however, Hite learned that the voiceover would say, "This is the typewriter

that's so smart *she* doesn't have to be." Hite was flabbergasted but didn't know what to do about it.

She read a few days later that the New York chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW) was

CHRIS BROSCH

ETC.

By Joel Bleifuss

From nonprofit to nonexistence

On June 9 the Heritage Foundation sponsored a meeting to discuss strategies for putting nonprofit public interest groups out of business. (See "The First Stone," June 26.) An anonymous member of this cabal took detailed notes, which were provided to *In These Times*.

The conclave was led by Marshall Wittmann, a senior fellow in congressional affairs at the Heritage Foundation. Discussion centered around a "grant reform" bill that will be introduced in the House by Reps. Ernest Istook (R-OK), David McIntosh (R-IN) and Robert Ehrlich (R-MD). The bill's sponsors plan to introduce their legislation in coming weeks and to bring it to a vote without holding public hearings.

Participants at the meeting were told that "spin" was crucial to the bill's success. The right would lose if their proposal was viewed as an attempt to "defund the left" or to create an "enemies list." Consequently, the legislation is being couched in terms of "good government" or "grant reform."

Unlike last year, when Congress debated a lobbying reform bill that would have required all nonprofits to release membership lists and funding sources, this year's anti-left initiatives will "tie disclosure requirements and tight restrictions" only to those groups that receive federal funds. Most conservative groups don't accept government support, while many

public interest groups, particularly those providing social services, do.

The "key assumption" behind the proposal is that any federal funds a nonprofit receives free up money for other uses. As a result, the bill will require that "all dollars within the organization must be tracked and subject to stringent rules." Such requirements will provide "comprehensive data" on how nonprofit public interest groups spend both "federal grants" and "other funds." The Tides Foundation of San Francisco, which funds the Peacenet online computer service and other left-liberal groups, was named as a prime offender because it "commingles federal funds with its own, and it goes who knows where."

In addition to tying up any nonprofit federal grant recipients in a morass of red tape, Istook's "reform" would "outlaw" lobbying by those nonprofits. And lobbying would be broadly redefined to include any "political advocacy." The proposed legislation includes "catch-all" definitions of lobbying, such as "attempting to influence any legislative action, or any governmental decision that is of general application."

Finally, the Heritage Foundation's Wittman called on conservative groups represented at the meeting to help him compile examples of how nonprofit organizations have abused federal grants. Once this "parade of horrors" is assembled, it will be trooped through the pages of the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Washington Times*.

ential women in America.

Although there were grumblings from some journalists and academics that Hite's methodology was unsound—*The Hite Report's* findings were based on 3,000 anonymous questionnaires—she continued her research, which has always taken her five to six years per book. *The Hite Report on Men and Male Sexuality*, published in 1981, suggested that cultural stereotypes deeply inhibited men's emotional and sexual lives. *Women and Love: A Cultural Revolution in Progress* followed in 1987. In it, Hite reported that 98 percent of her female respondents were dissatisfied with their relationships and that women were initiating the vast majority of divorces.

After *Women and Love*, Hite's critics became increasingly venomous, many impugning her personally rather than grappling with the substance of her ideas. Others attacked her methodology, claiming Hite's studies were "biased." Susan Faludi pointed out the hypocrisy in *Backlash*: "The press charged that she used a small and unrepresentative sample. Yet ... the results of many psychological and social science studies that journalists uncritically report are based on much smaller and nonrandom samples." The real—but unexpressed—concern seemed to be a fear of discussing evidence of women's power and independence from men.

This certainly seems to be the case with *The Hite Report on the Family*, which publisher E.P. Dutton had initially agreed to print, but then rejected at the last minute. In it, Hite argues that changes in the family structure—especially increased divorce rates—do not signal a social crisis. Published a year ago in Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and Holland, the book's message was apparently too controversial for Dutton to touch. "In the McCarthy period," Hite points out, "censorship was more open than it is now. Today, most people aren't aware how many things are not available in the United States."

The book's conclusions were based on 3,000 anonymous surveys from children and adults living in 16 countries; half of the responses were from the United States. Her questions were open-ended and intimate: Do you know how your parents felt about having you? Did your father or mother look at pornography? At what age were your children closest to you?

The results demonstrate that men raised by single mothers enjoy better relationships with women and that children's respect for their mothers has increased with the rise in single and employed mothers. The traditional nuclear family, Hite suggests, is often inferior to alternative arrangements. But not all hope is lost: "The family is a human institution: humans made it and humans can change it," she says.

Given all the media hype that two-parent families are most beneficial to children, Hite's conclusions are startling. Her data show that "there can be beneficial effects for the majority of children living in single-parent families. It is more positive for children not to grow up in an atmosphere poisoned by gender inequality."

Perhaps growing up in a non-nuclear family herself gave Hite part of her inspiration. She was raised by her maternal grandparents, then by a maternal aunt and uncle in Daytona Beach, Florida. Today Hite, who divides her time between France and Germany, is married to a German pianist 20 years her junior. Since both are frequent travelers, they spend a great deal of time apart. Nevertheless, she says they have a "good marriage" which, based on Hite's definition, "is one that makes two people feel good in a real way."

— Leora Tanenbaum

THE FIRST STONE

BUILDING PLANS

By Joel Bleifuss

Throughout the 1980s and '90s right-wing foundations were strategically investing their dollars in political infrastructure, pouring their money into think tanks, universities, conferences and media outlets. Left-leaning foundations made no such corresponding investment, which is one reason why the right is ascendent and the left is slowly disintegrating.

"The foundations on the right are very ambitious funders. They are very strategic, and their goals are very well-defined," says Nan Aron, executive director of the Alliance for Justice in Washington. "They are not at all concerned about getting right in the middle of funding controversial social projects." She notes that, unlike the left, the right has built and subsidized an entire media apparatus.

In the March issue of *Extra!*, the monthly publication of Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, *In These Times* associate publisher Beth Schulman examined how the right has supported its press. She notes that between 1990 and 1993, right-wing foundations invested \$2.7 million in four conservative publications: *The New Criterion*, *National Interest*, *Public Interest* and *American Spectator*. On the other hand, during those three years left foundations invested 10 percent of that amount, \$269,000, in *The Nation*, *The Progressive*, *Mother Jones* and *In These Times*.

In addition to helping build a media empire, the right's foundations have committed enormous resources to conservative think tanks. John Tirman, director of Washington's liberal Winston Foundation and a member of the board of *Mother Jones*, told Schulman that the right recognizes government policies are based on information that comes on a "conveyor

belt from thinkers, academics and activists." The right's conveyor belt, according to Tirman, is humming along. "We've let ours break down," he says. According to the *Foundation Directory* in 1992, three of the largest right-wing foundations spent their funds in the following manner:

The Bradley Foundation in Milwaukee invested \$555,100 in the Heritage Foundation and \$350,000 in the American Enterprise Institute (AEI).

The Sara Mellon Scaife Foundation in Pittsburgh invested \$1 million in the Heritage Foundation, \$850,000 in the Hoover Institute and \$225,000 in the AEI.

The John Olin Foundation in New York City invested \$2.4 million in seven fellowships at such right-leaning think tanks as the Hudson Institute and kindred colleges such as the University of Chicago.

The people who manage right-wing foundations understand the power they possess. And guarding that power is the task of the Capital Research Center, which was created in 1984 to prevent foundations established by capitalists

from being taken over by socialists. As the center sees it, the philanthropic world falls into two camps: "Generally, capitalists who create the fortunes that make foundations possible are conservative or libertarian; those who inherit or dispose of this wealth, including heirs to estates and foundation executives, however, are usually liberal or socialist."

It is true that the heirs to fortunes are sometimes more politically enlightened than their capitalist forbears. For instance, the Arca Foundation, which was established with money from the R.J. Reynolds tobacco fortune, is now among the nation's most progressive funders. Arca is the principal sponsor of the University Conversion Project, a Cambridge, Mass. group that has been tracking the right's investment on American campuses.

The project's Jeremy Smith says, "During the mid-'80s the right-wing organizations made a decision that they would start investing in youth and that they would build an alternative-press apparatus on campus."

For example, the Madison Center for Educational Affairs, a group supported by contributions from conservative foundations, spent millions of dollars to establish 66 right-wing papers on campuses from Yale to the University of California at Santa Cruz. In the 1990-91 school year alone, eight right-wing foundations contributed \$519,000 to support the Madison Center's media efforts.

This investment has paid off, according to *The Conservative Guide to Campus Activism*, a publication of Young Americans for Freedom. New-right wunderkind Dinesh D'Souza, who cut his political teeth at the *Dartmouth Review*, explains: "A conservative newspaper or magazine

fills a crucial void. To students, it says that there is another way of looking at the world. ... To faculty members, it says that the legacy of the 1960s has by no means monolithically been transferred to the youth ethos of the 1990s."

The Madison Center wasn't the only college-focused operation to receive substantial conservative funding during the 1990-91 school year. According to the University Conversion Project, 19 right-leaning foundations invested \$1.8 million in 11 right-wing student groups—groups like the Eagle Forum Collegians, the youth brigade of Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum. Last year's Collegian leadership conference, held in the Russell Senate Office Building Caucus Room, featured topics like: "How to Successfully Terminate Liberal Campus Organizations," "Defunding the Nation's Largest Student Lobby" and "How to Deal with Liberal Professors." This last presentation was given by David Murray, a scholar at the Heritage Foundation whose position is funded by the above-mentioned Bradley Foundation.

Partly because an alternative right press existed on campuses during the '80s, while a left counterpart did not, right-wing student groups gained credibility, as did right-wing thought in general.

Where were the left funders when all this was happening? "On the left there is no commitment to funding any sort of national press apparatus," says the University Conversion Project's Smith. "That is why the right managed to gain so much ground in the 1980s."

Besides maintaining its political infrastructure, right-wing foundations and donors are currently helping foment the conservative cultural backlash by funding the likes of Concerned Women For America, Family Life Ministries, Focus on the Family, Traditional Values Coalition and Family Research Council.

Political Research Associates, of Cambridge, Mass., has long been monitoring the funding and the activities of the Republican hard right. "If you are the party of the wealthy, you can't sell yourself by saying, 'Vote for us. We are the party of the rich,'" says Chip Berlet, the group's analyst. "You have to recast the debate as a cultural war. The basis for your party then is to save culture, save America. That is much more appealing than to save Dow's rich investors." And there is no hypocrisy involved, as the right believes that American culture is decaying and that the tax laws do punish those who create wealth. "The two beliefs work hand in hand," says Berlet. "One provides cover for the other."

Fighting the right is a current emphasis of both funders and progressive

groups. But Berlet laments the fact that such organizing is being done in an informational vacuum. For example, he would like to find out how many people associated with the militia movement actually believe some of the crazier conspiracy theories that bounce around far-right circles. But few foundations have been willing to fund such studies. "We are launching whole campaigns to fight the right, without a clue of what we are fighting," says Berlet. "There is no political infrastructure. We need research, think-tanks, conferences and publications, then community organizers can go out with an idea of what to do. Through sharing information and debating ideas you reach conclusions about what actions will work."

A partial excuse for this sad state of affairs is simply that right-wing philanthropies have more money than the left. But, more importantly, the left has made a fundamental strategic mistake. While the right has been busy destroying the intellectual foundations of the welfare state, too many on the left have responded by sponsoring stop-gap responses such as soup kitchens and homeless shelters. "It is like being below a dam that is leaking," says Berlet. "Your house is covered in a foot of water. You start mopping faster and faster and then someone comes and says, 'You know, if we fix the dam we are not going to be knee-deep in water.' And you say, 'Don't bother me, I'm mopping.'"

THE ADVENTURES OF A HUGE MOUTH

by Peter Hannan



C O M M U N I C A T I O N S

Telecon

O

***Corporations
controlled the
battle over
the landmark
communications
law of 1934.
As Congress
rewrites that
law today, the
public interest
is again being
ignored.***

**By Robert W.
McChesney**

n June 15, the U.S. Senate overwhelmingly passed a new telecommunications bill that would deregulate the telephone, cable TV and broadcasting industries. The House is expected to pass a similar bill this summer, and the President has indicated that he will sign it.

The new legislation addresses the digital revolution in communications technology—which has blurred the distinctions between old industries such as telephone and cable, and led to the creation of entirely new industries like online computer services. Since this bill will shape what the *New York Times* calls “the \$700 billion data highway,” it may well be the most important piece of communications legislation since the Federal Communications Act of 1934, and it is probably one of the most important laws passed by Congress in decades.

You might think, therefore, that this legislation would have been carefully debated during lengthy

hearings in which public interest groups were represented. But the brief hearings on the bill were dominated by business lobbyists, who actually wrote whole sections of the Senate measure behind the scenes. Organized consumer groups—who never challenged the corporate control of communications, but merely wanted certain regulations retained—were shut out of the process entirely. As Brad Stillman, a representative of the Consumer Federation of America, put it, “if you look at this legislation, there is something for absolutely everybody—except the consumer.”

Communications policymaking has been largely impervious to public influence since the passage of the 1934 Federal Communications Act, which ensured that private corporations would dominate American telecommunications. Supporters of the

1934 law insisted that the public interest could best be served by companies primarily interested in making a profit. But by relegating noncommercial broadcasters to the margins of the U.S. airwaves, the legislation of 1934 seriously distorted America’s media and tragically affected the quality of our political culture.

Today, however, spectacular new technologies hold the promise of revitalizing communications in the United States. Perhaps the most dramatic development has been the rise of the Internet and online computer services. The Internet has permitted mass interactive communication and has given millions of users relatively cheap access to information at lightning speed. Undoubtedly, much of the hype surrounding the information superhighway is just that—hype. Nevertheless, a democratically designed communications network—one that attempted to make a wide variety of information available to the largest number of citizens—could have an enormous and positive impact on politics, education and culture. A revitalized public debate concerning how best to establish a viable communications system in the public interest is long overdue. If this is an issue unworthy of public participation, then one must wonder what the purpose of democracy is.

But the debate in Congress over the future of telecommunications policy has disregarded issues of democracy and fair-

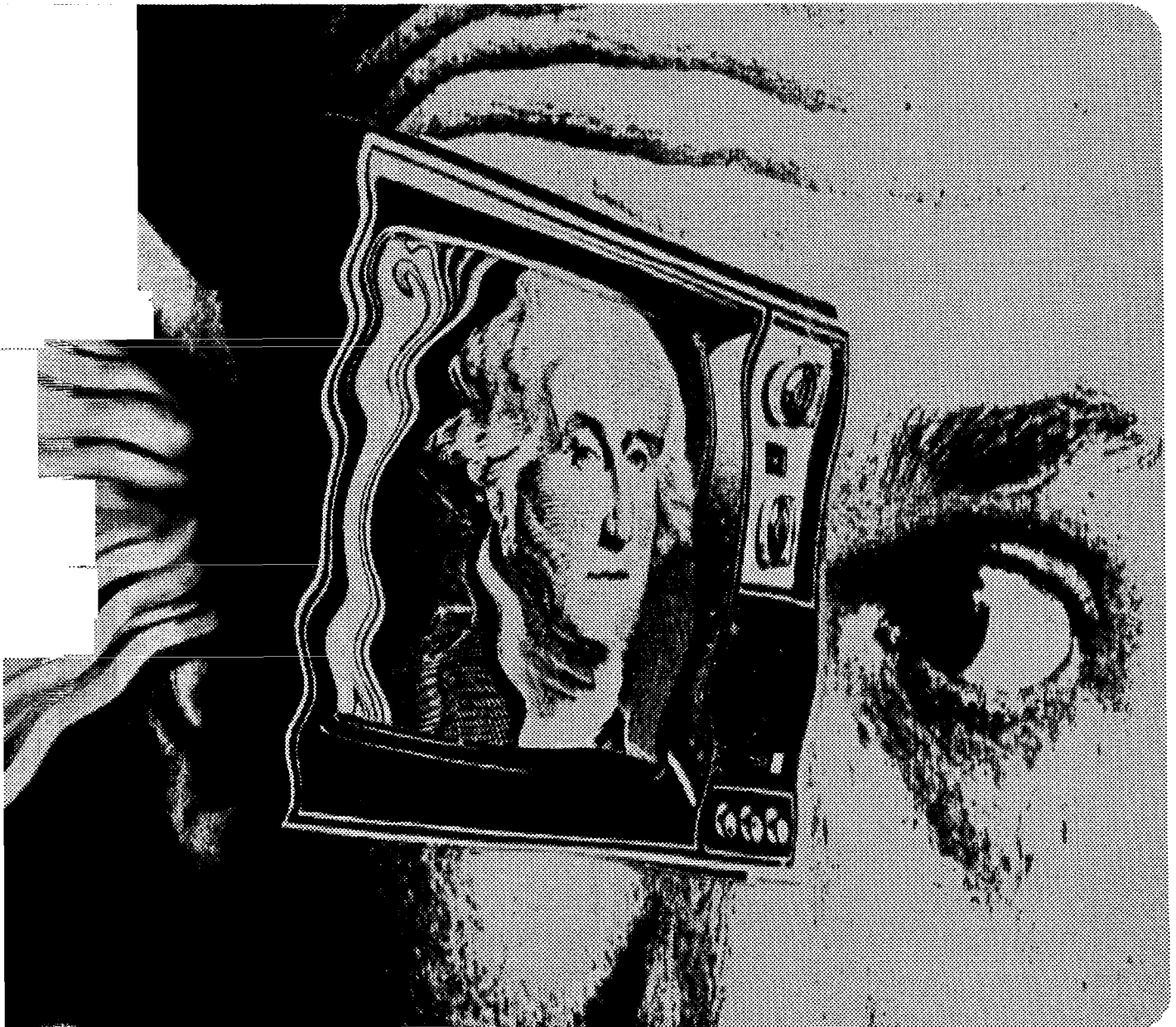
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ness. Lawmakers have focused instead on gutting regulations that impede the profitability of companies seeking to develop new communications technologies. And so, the current legislative process has been guided by the same assumption that led to the disastrous Communications Act of 1934: namely, that competition among corporations in the marketplace will provide the most efficient and democratic communications system.

The tightening oligarchy of telecommunications companies that arose in the wake of the 1934 law shows how misguided that assumption was. And there is no reason to believe that a new law based on the same logic will be any more viable as a guide to opening up the digital frontier. As one former Microsoft executive warned, "The information highway is too important to be left to the private compa-

nies." Our society must determine who will control the new technologies and for what purpose. Of course, in determining this question, we also dictate who will *not* control this technology and what purposes will *not* be privileged. Consider the history of the Communications Act of 1934—a case study in how the public interest can be sacrificed in badly managed debates over cynically conceived communications laws.

The current communications revolution closely parallels that of the 1920s, when the emergence of radio broadcasting forced society to address the same political questions. Radio broadcasting was then radically new, and there was great confusion throughout the '20s concerning who should control this powerful new technology and for what



purposes. Much of the impetus for radio broadcasting came first from early ham radio operators and then from non-profit and noncommercial groups that immediately grasped the public service potential of the new technology. It was only in the late '20s that capitalists began to sense that, by selling advertising and building national chains of stations, commercial radio could generate substantial profits. The capitalists moved quickly, however.

In the wake of a 1926 Supreme Court ruling that revoked all broadcast licenses, Congress hastily drafted a bill creating a new regulatory authority known as the Federal Radio Commission (the predecessor to today's Federal Communications Commission). Through their immense power in Washington, D.C., the commercial broadcasters were able to dominate the Federal Radio Commission so that the scarce number of channels were turned over to them with no public and little Congressional deliberation.

As the commercial networks began growing rapidly in the late '20s, a diverse broadcast reform movement attempted to establish a dominant role for the nonprofit and noncommercial sector in U.S. broadcasting. These opponents of commercialism—including religious groups, labor unions, educational organizations and women's groups—appealed to the public by tapping into the widespread disgust with the early advertisements on radio. "If [advertisers] are allowed to continue for another ten years," writer Upton Sinclair warned in 1931, "we shall have the most debased and vulgarized people in the world." The reformers maintained that if private interests controlled the medium, no amount of regulation or self-regulation could overcome the profit bias built into the system. Commercial broadcasting, the reformers argued, would downplay controversial and provocative public affairs programming and emphasize whatever fare would sell the most products for advertisers. They looked to Canada and Britain for workable models of public-service broadcasting.

But the reform movement disintegrated after the passage of the Communications Act of 1934, which established the FCC and remains the reigning statute for telecommunications in the United States. The radio lobby—with a sophisticated public relations campaign and support from other news media—won because it was able to keep most Americans ignorant or confused about communications policy. In addition, commercial broadcasters became a force that few politicians wished to antagonize; almost all of the congressional leaders who pushed for broadcast reform in 1931-32 were defeated in the 1932 elections, a lesson not lost on those who replaced them. With the defeat of the reformers, the industry argument that commercial broadcasting was

inherently democratic and American went unchallenged.

In the case of television, Congress and the FCC determined in the 1934 law and in later decisions that a few enormous corporations would control the medium for the purpose of maximizing profits. This decision put the development of television on a path far different from that followed in many European countries, where noncommercial broadcasters have been able to pursue interests beyond profit. The effects of this choice have been ruinous for public debate in America. Today, the idea that private, for-profit broadcasting is synonymous with democracy is an unexamined tenet of our political culture.

Since 1934, the only politically acceptable criticism of U.S. broadcasting—and, more broadly, American telecommunications—has been to assert that it is uncompetitive and



therefore needs more aggressive regulation. Liberals have argued that a scarce number of channels mandates aggressive regulation—not that the capitalist basis of the industry is fundamentally flawed. This is a far cry from the criticism of the broadcast reformers of the 1930s.

Now, with the current communications revolution vastly expanding the number of channels, the scarcity argument has lost its power. Liberals thus find themselves unable to challenge the deregulatory juggernaut. Contemporary public-service advocates would be wise to study the 1930s reformers to find a critique of commercial communication based not on the lack of competition, but on the very workings of the market, regardless of the amount of competition or the number of channels that technology may provide. This is the only type of public-service criticism that can hold any water in the digital era.

Because our society takes it for granted that private corporations rightfully dominate American communications, there has been little discussion questioning whether the information highway should be turned over to for-profit companies. Consequently, the mainstream press—accepting the primacy of corporate control and the profit motive—considers only which firms will dominate the communications revolution, and which firms will fall by the wayside.

The current range of legitimate debate is distressingly narrow. It starts with Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Larry Pressler, author of the Senate's deregulatory bill,

who argues that profits are synonymous with public service. And it extends to Vice-President Al Gore, the proponent of 1993's tougher cable TV regulations, who accepts that there are some public interest concerns the marketplace cannot resolve, but insists that those concerns can be addressed only after the profitability of the dominant corporate sector has been assured. The Gore position can be dressed up to sound high and mighty, but the historical record is clear: If the needs of corporations are given primacy, the public interest will invariably be pushed to the margins.

Politicians may favor one sector over another in the battle to cash in on the information superhighway, but they cannot oppose the cashing-in process, except at the risk of their political careers. In the 1993-94 election cycle, political action committees linked to the telecommunications industry gave almost \$7 million to politicians from both parties, according to figures compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics. The only grounds for political courage in this case would be if there were an informed and mobilized citizenry ready to do battle for alternative policies. Of course, citizens get their information from the corporate news media, which stands to benefit from the pending legislation. That is why telecommunications reform has been covered as a business story, not as a public policy story, and that is why the critical congressional hearings have passed virtually without public notice. In short, this is a debate restricted to those with serious financial stakes in the outcome.

In place of this non-debate, we need to challenge the entire theory of market-ruled communications. Free enterprise advocates argue that the market provides the only truly democratic policymaking mechanism because it rewards capitalists who "give the people what they want" and penalizes those who do not. But the market is not predicated upon the idea of one-person, one-vote as in democratic theory, but rather is predicated upon the rule of one-dollar, one-vote. The prosperous have many votes and the poor have none. And the market does not "give the people what they want" as much as it "gives the people what they want within the range of what is most profitable to produce." This is often a far narrower range than what people might enjoy choosing from. Thus, when Congress drafted broadcast legislation in the '30s, many Americans may well have been willing to pay for an advertising-free system, but this choice was not profitable for the dominant commercial interests, so it was not offered on the marketplace.

Is the current legislative situation therefore hopeless? Unfortunately, the immediate answer is an unequivocal yes. Some public-interest advocates have made thoughtful arguments for noncommercial interests to prevail on the communications highway. After all, it seems downright irrational to turn over control of society's central nervous system to a handful of transnational corporations guided strictly by profit. But this argument is now more marginal than ever.

At the same time, the sheer magnitude of the possibilities

brought on by the new technologies will allow nonprofit niches to survive and perhaps even prosper in a regime of corporate domination. As long as the communications corporations continue to battle for control over the new markets, nonprofits may be able to exploit opportunities that will not exist once the industry has stabilized. In the late '20s and early '30s, for example—before the radio networks had consolidated legal control over the airwaves—civic groups were able to establish quite a bit of educational programming on the commercial stations. The networks, sensitive to charges that they cared only for profit, hoped to convince lawmakers of their benevolence by giving away airtime. Of course, soon after the 1934 law was passed, the commercial stations slashed their educational programming. Perhaps today, as a TCI or Bell Atlantic attempts to convince America of its good intentions, some noncommercial group may be given free access to the information superhighway. Unfortunately, there is every reason to believe that today's nonprofits will fare just as poorly as yesterday's educators once the digital frontier has been tamed.

In some ways, the emergence of the new technologies could not have come at a more inopportune moment. In the 1930s an impressive array of civic organizations was willing to argue that it was inappropriate for communications media to be directed by the profit motive—back then even blue-blood Republicans questioned whether for-profit firms should dominate communications. Today, few Democrats would question the natural right of the private sector to dominate the information superhighway. We live in an era in which the very notion of public service has become discredited unless as a function of noblesse oblige. It thus should be no surprise that the private sector, with its immense resources, has seized the initiative and is commercializing cyberspace at a spectacular rate—effectively transforming it into a giant shopping mall.

The contours of the emerging communications battle are still unclear, but most business observers expect a flurry of competition followed by the establishment of a stable oligopoly dominated by a handful of enormous firms. What is clear is that the communications highway will not be devoted to reducing inequality or misery in our society. In fact, without any policies to counteract the market, the new technologies will probably create a world of information haves and have-nots, thereby exacerbating our society's already considerable social and economic inequality.

Nowhere is the absurdity of a profit-driven society more clear than in the case of communications, where technologies with the capacity to liberate are being constrained by the need to generate profit for corporate masters. In this sense, the battle to create a nonprofit and noncommercial communications system will be—and must be—part and parcel of progressive efforts to create a more just society. ◀ **Robert W. McChesney** teaches journalism at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His book *Telecommunications, Mass Media, and Democracy: The Battle for the Control of U.S. Broadcasting, 1928-1935* (Oxford, 1993) is now available in paperback.

BLACK AMERICA

Political prisoner

**Mumia
Abu-Jamal
faces execution
next month in
a case steeped
in the bitter
racial
politics of
Philadelphia.**

By Salim Muwakkil

For 12 years journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal has been on Pennsylvania's Death Row awaiting execution for the 1981 murder of a Philadelphia police officer. Although the 41-year-old former member of the Black Panther Party has been the focus of an international crusade to force a new trial, on June 2, Republican Gov. Thomas Ridge of Pennsylvania signed Abu-Jamal's death warrant and scheduled August 17 as his execution date.

The murky circumstances surrounding Abu-Jamal's arrest and the judicial irregularities that marred his trial have convinced many that he is due to die for reasons more political than criminal. And Ridge's action only intensified the protests by the remarkable collection of supporters that Abu-Jamal has attracted during his incarceration. Rallies condemning Ridge's decision have erupted in dozens of cities across the United

States, Europe and Asia.

Three days after the warrant was signed, Leonard Weinglass, Abu-Jamal's lead attorney, filed an appeal asking for a stay of execution and a new trial. In a speech announcing the appeal, Weinglass said Ridge had known that Abu-Jamal's legal team was gathering evidence contradicting the court ruling and was preparing to file an appeal in early June. Never before in the state's history, said Weinglass, had a governor signed a Death Row inmate's warrant for execution while an appeal for a new trial was in process.

Clearly, Ridge's move was a gesture to Philadelphia's politically potent Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), which has led a massive campaign of its own to ensure that Abu-Jamal is executed. It was the FOP that last year pressured National Public Radio to cancel plans to broadcast Abu-Jamal's commentaries from Death Row.

Those commentaries were collected and published in May as a book titled *Live From Death Row*, published by Addison-Wesley.

Abu-Jamal was convicted of killing officer Daniel Faulkner in a 1981 confrontation. The prosecution argued that the defendant, then working as a cab driver, observed his brother, William Cook, resisting an arrest by Faulkner and attempted to intervene. The encounter occurred in a popular nightclub district of the city, and many people were reportedly on the scene. During the confrontation, both Abu-Jamal and Faulkner were shot. Abu-Jamal's supporters contend that Faulkner was brutally assaulting Cook when Abu-Jamal happened on the scene—and in the ensuing melee, the officer was shot and killed by an assailant who escaped in the crowd.

"We now have evidence, we have proof, that the police knew that there were four people who saw the shooter run away that night," Weinglass insisted in a June 5 speech outside Philadelphia City Hall, where he filed the appeal. The legal team also is requesting Judge Albert Sabo recuse himself; he is a lifetime member of the FOP and has the distinction of putting more people on Death Row than any judge in the United States. Sabo has also had an unusually large number of his decisions reversed by appellate courts.

Before his early-morning encounter with police on December 9, 1981, Abu-Jamal was a rising star in Philadelphia. Named as president of the National Association of Black Journalists' local chapter and a "person to watch" by *Philadelphia Magazine* for his work in both print and radio journalism, Abu-Jamal seemed destined for a prestigious niche in the city's media firmament.

But he also was a founder of the Black Panther Party's Philadelphia chapter and a strong supporter of MOVE, a controversial, black-led group. He gained particular notice



Philadelphia's
Fraternal Order
of Police hold

Mumia Abu-Jamal execution/family cookout.

for his sympathetic coverage of MOVE during a 1978 conflict with Philadelphia police in which an officer was killed. Abu-Jamal's close relationship to both groups earned him the enmity of many Philly cops.

The late Frank Rizzo, a former police commissioner who was mayor during the 1978 confrontation, singled out Abu-Jamal's coverage and denounced his "advocacy journalism." Rizzo was noted for his iron-fisted approach to street crime and his racist pronouncements. The city's Black Panther chapter was one of Rizzo's pet peeves, and he regularly sought to humiliate the group. Abu-Jamal was in his early teens when he co-founded the Panthers, and his personal disputes with the police began during the Rizzo's reign as top cop.

During this period, it turns out, Abu-Jamal was also under surveillance by the FBI. A few weeks before Ridge signed his death warrant, the FBI grudgingly released 700 pages of formerly secret (but still heavily censored) documents detailing its surveillance of Abu-Jamal.

And as the FBI has come forward with its cache of documents, Weinglass and his team have uncovered substantial new evidence suggesting that Abu-Jamal deserves a new

trial. In the appeal for a judicial review of the case, Weinglass has marshaled more than 300 pages of materials, including 47 exhibits and 13 new affidavits. According to Weinglass, "What we show generally is, first, Mumia never had a [fair] trial; the jury was racially picked. With respect to the evidence, we have proof that the prosecution had frightened and coerced people who wanted to testify for Mumia and that they gave favors to people who testified against him." Weinglass also contends that the prosecution purposely lost important evidence.

But in the wake of Ridge's execution order, it's all up to Judge Sabo. If he doesn't recuse himself and refuses to stay the execution, Abu-Jamal's attorneys then will appeal to state's Supreme Court, the Federal Appeals Court and then U.S. Supreme Court as a last resort.

But while that judicial struggle takes place, his supporters will be increasing the intensity of their protests and rallies in more energetic attempts to mobilize political support. Much of the mobilization is being organized through the Internet. According to Marpessa Kupidua, a Philadelphia activist who is coordinating the Internet effort to publicize support for Abu-Jamal, "we've received an amazing amount of support from our posts on the Net."

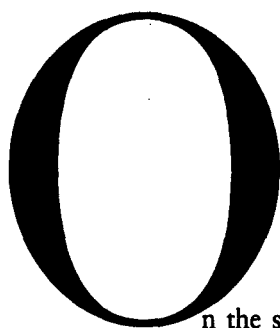
What's more, she notes, the Internet remains the primary source of international coordination. Notices posted on the Net's Usenet newsgroups have greatly increased the volume of information circulating about Abu-Jamal's appeal. There are at least 10 sites on the Internet's World Wide Web that are focused on the Abu-Jamal case.

The effort is producing extraordinary results, Kupidua says. She has maintained contacts with several international groups who first heard of the case through the Internet. "We've hooked up with groups in the Netherlands, Spain, Italy and Japan exclusively through our connection on the Internet," Kupidua says.

Although Kupidua hopes to continue raising consciousness over the Internet, she believes that traditional forms of political mobilization—which put direct pressure on politicians—will be essential in any efforts to force a retrial. The FOP has pulled out all the stops to push for Abu-Jamal's execution, and the political winds are behind it. Those who believe Abu-Jamal's state-ordered death would be an injustice must generate some of their own political wind before it's too late.

D E F E N S E

Weapons at all costs



n the same day that the U.S. House of Representatives passed a military budget bill that added even more funding to the Clinton Administration's already extravagant request, leaders of the U.S. militia movement testified before a Senate subcommittee. It was, in many ways, a fitting convergence of events. As wacky as the militia men sounded in citing recent tornadoes as an example of government "weather-control techniques," the House speeches in support of the expanded budget seemed equally irrational. Altogether, the Defense Authorization Bill approved by the House included \$9 billion *more than* the Pentagon had already requested. Eighty-six Democrats joined 214 Republicans in signalling the start of a new, post-Cold War arms build-up.

Republicans and the House-broken Democrats offended even the Depart-

ment of Defense (DOD) with their profligate ways. Referring to the funds added for the B-2 bomber and other weapons the DOD didn't want, Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon announced, "We will continue to fight to spend the money the way we think it should be spent."

Bacon's name furnished another oddly appropriate note to the occasion, for the House Defense Authorization Bill was a study in pork. The B-2, for example, was originally designed to bomb the Soviet Union *after* a nuclear war had started. And the United States has already purchased 20 at a total cost of \$44 billion. The Air Force and the DOD have both issued detailed studies demonstrating that the plane is too costly and unsuited to our national security needs. But House hawks added \$553 million to the fiscal 1996 budget, funds that will pave the way for 20 more B-2 Stealth bombers. Perhaps the rationale goes something like this: Only by using weapons you can't see can you attack an enemy that doesn't exist.

For a moment, it nearly seemed that Congress was prepared to shoot the bomber down. Reps. Ron Dellums (D-CA) and John Kasich (R-OH) co-sponsored an amendment that would have cut funding for the plane. But the B-2 contractors wisely had distributed bomber-related contracts and jobs in numerous districts, and the amendment was defeated 219-203. Traditional Pentagon critics who voted for the B-2 for political reasons included Maxine Waters (D-CA), George Brown (D-CA) and Maurice Hinchey (D-NY).

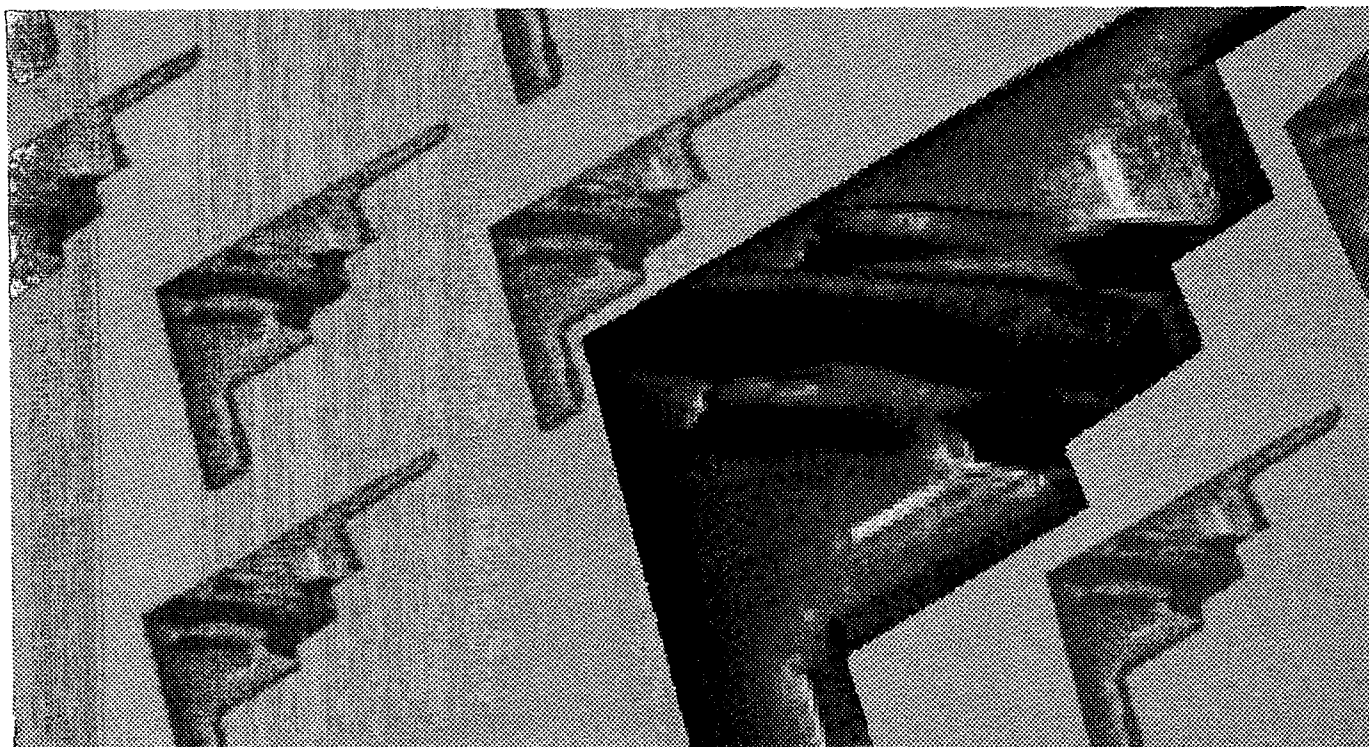
The B-2 is just part of a stable of new weapon systems, including the F-22 fighter, the Seawolf submarine and the DDG-51-class guided-missile destroyer, that congressional hawks are pushing to fill a supposed modernization gap. Originally designed to combat the Soviet Union in the 21st century, these Cold War weapons march on, despite an arsenal purchased during the Reagan era that will keep America superior to any potential foe well into the next century.

Congress' determination to disregard reality creates paradoxes that rival the most demented logic of the American arms build-up at the height of the Cold War. For example, production of the F-22 will compel the Air Force to prematurely retire F-15 fighters, which are already the world's best combat aircraft—and will likely remain so until 2014 and beyond. The United States would essentially be throwing away years of useful service life for the F-15 by pursuing an arms race with itself. Critics of such wasteful military spending estimate that canceling or delaying new systems like the F-22 would save the country more than \$50 billion over the next five years.

The absurdities of the Defense Authorization Bill don't end there, however. The bill could stand as a textbook case of counterproductive policy-making. For example, the

*Congress
undercuts U.S.
diplomacy to
keep throwing
money at the
Pentagon.*

By Ira Shorr
WASHINGTON



Defense Authorization bill calls for adding \$453 million in spending for a national ballistic missile defense system, more than doubling the Clinton request. This system is designed to defend the American mainland from ballistic missile attacks—in other words, it's Star Wars revisited. Development of the system flies in the face of the Pentagon's claim that "there is no immediate threat" to U.S. security from ballistic missiles. And the system also risks rekindling the arms race because it sends a message to the Russians that the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty is no longer relevant. The ABM Treaty, negotiated in 1972, served as insurance against either nuclear superpower launching a nuclear first-strike; the absence of an anti-ballistic missile defense system rendered both powers vulnerable to a retaliatory strike. The ABM agreement thus supplied the foundation for the reduction of nuclear weapons laid out in the SALT and START treaties.

Republicans in Congress claim that the missile defense system is necessary to protect us against a potentially belligerent Russia and its still-potent nuclear arsenal. But this strategy seeks to have it both ways. Telling the Russians they are now an enemy and constructing costly defense systems against them will spur them, quite rationally, to regard the United States as an enemy and to build their own new weapons to penetrate America's defenses. Russian diplomats have announced that violating the ABM Treaty would probably doom the START II treaty and its proposed reductions in the stockpile of U.S. and Russian nuclear missiles.

As though to make sure that the Russian threat doesn't disappear, the bill also cuts \$171 million—nearly half of the total budget—from the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, which had been designed to help Russia dismantle its

own nuclear missiles. Military supporters cling tenaciously to the putative Russian threat because without it the Pentagon's stated goal of being able to fight two simultaneous wars without allies lacks the specter of an enemy. And national security concerns then become a still flimsier excuse for keeping the military off-limits while federal social programs face draconian cuts.

What is fueling such reckless legislation? The same forces that stoked the Cold War arms race—defense contractors and the politicians who take their money. For example, a study by the Center for Responsive Politics in Washington D.C., showed that from 1991 through October 1994 defense contractors involved in ballistic missile defense gave \$1.4 million in PAC contributions to current members of the House National Security Committee. Not surprisingly, this committee recommended that the House move on missile defense appropriations "at the earliest possible date."

Meanwhile, the conversion of defense industries to civilian uses and defense-related environmental clean-ups inspired no such zeal. House Republicans related horror stories of former defense employees working at McDonald's even as they zeroed out the \$500 million that President Clinton had requested for the Technology Reinvestment Program. This is the Clinton administration's flagship conversion initiative, which seeks to develop technologies with both civilian and military applications while helping to place former defense workers in jobs that produce goods and services the country really needs. The Defense Authorization bill also slashed \$200 million from DOD efforts to clean up toxic sites on military bases and \$750 million from Depart-

ment of Energy programs to clean up polluted nuclear weapons production sites.

So far the Senate, which is preparing to take up the budget for the 1996 fiscal year, has called for holding to the administration's military spending request of \$258 billion. But House Republicans are confident that a conference committee will produce a final allocation closer to the House's figures.

Some House members, such as Dellums and Pat Schroeder (D-CO), spoke eloquently against the bill. Schroeder pointed out that the \$9.5 billion in excess Pentagon funding could "clean up 380 Superfund sites, pay for Pell grants for 4 million needy students, cover prenatal and postpartum care for 2.4 million uninsured pregnant women, cover child-care costs for 2.5 million children under the age of five for a year, or provide nutritious meal[s] for 11.6 million hungry people a year."

Of course, none of these constituencies has a PAC. So the nation's congressional representatives can be expected to continue showering money on a senseless arms build-up. After all, the only potential enemies on the horizon (Iraq, Iran, Libya, North Korea and Cuba) are *together* spending less than \$15 billion on their militaries. America spends 17 times more on its military than do these six countries combined.

The militias may be paranoid kooks armed to the teeth—but they appear to have many brothers in arms in the U.S. Congress.

Ira Shorr is senior producer of *America's Defense Monitor*, a weekly television program produced by the Center for Defense Information.

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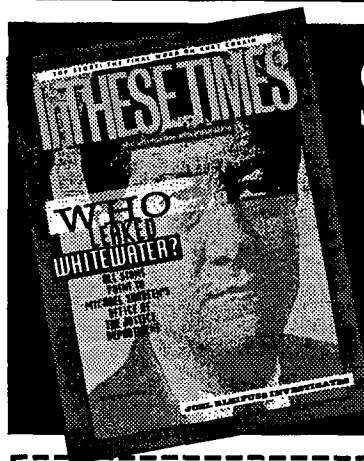
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*Why
suppressing
speech is
too costly a
strategy in
combating
sexual
harassment*

By Nan Levinson

It's a case with "Supreme Court written all over it," says Alan Dershowitz, one of the attorneys involved in *Bowman v. Heller*—a tangled conflict over free speech and sexual harassment. That may well be where the case is headed after a June 13 ruling from the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court (SJC). The SJC decided on appeal that the First Amendment is not necessarily protection against harassment, making it the highest court in the country to address the issue directly.

Bowman does seem to have all the trappings of a classic: high-minded rhetoric about dirty pictures, a sympathetic victim of rotten behavior and the clash of civil rights with civil liberties. It's certainly a case with no easy answers. Or maybe it's that the answers provided by the First Amendment and civil rights

law might be able to resolve the legal issues, but not the human ones.

It began in 1987, when Sylvia Smith Bowman was a 61-year-old social work supervisor of long standing in the Worcester, Mass. office of the Department of Public Welfare (DPW), and David Heller, young enough to be her son, was a social worker there at a lower rank. Both were active in their union—Local 509 of the Service Employees International Union, with 8,700 members at 400 sites around the state—and Bowman was making her second run for its presidency against the incumbent, whom Heller supported.

By all accounts, there was no love lost between them, but no one paid much attention until the campaign was ending and David Heller created a couple of caricatures much like the satirical paste-ups of politicians he was known for passing around the office as a joke. This time, though, his target was not a politician but a colleague—Bowman—and the caricatures were sexual.

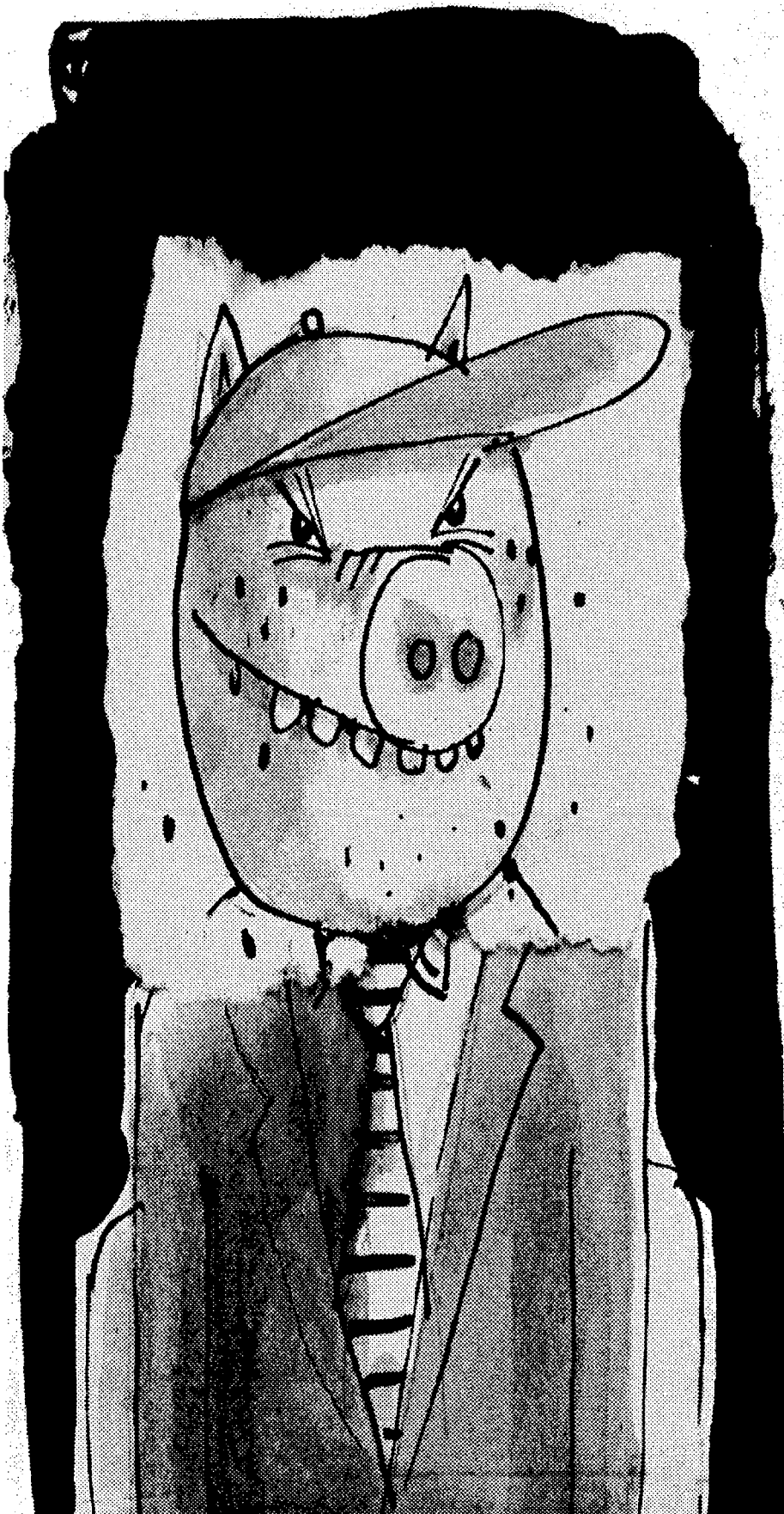
Heller cut a photo of Bowman's head from her campaign literature and pasted it atop two photos from girlie magazines featuring the nearly naked bodies of young women, one with her hand between her spread legs, the other grasping an unpeeled banana to her breast. (The court sealed the photos, but descriptions in the legal briefs are models of graphic understatement.) Heller also clipped Bowman's name from her literature and pasted it on the photos as well. He made a few copies of the collages and showed them to co-workers he thought would appreciate his "off-color" humor. They made more copies, though Heller claims he asked them not to. In any event, the collages didn't remain secret for long.

Bowman learned about the pictures from her campaign coordinator, but waited until the campaign was done to look. When she did, they upset her so greatly that the owner of a nearby store Bowman was visiting closed shop for 45 minutes, fearing she was having a heart attack.

Bowman lost the election by about 400 votes, though it doesn't appear the collages were responsible. According to her testimony, though, they were responsible for making her feel "degraded, humiliated, and vulnerable" and compromised in her work. She filed complaints, and the DPW, finding that Heller's conduct constituted sexual harassment, suspended him without pay for a week, required him to stay away from Bowman and to apologize in writing.

Two-and-a-half years later, as the statute of limitations was about to expire, Bowman sued, charging defamation, emotional distress and interference with her right to run for office. On the eve of the trial, she added the charge of sexual harassment under the Massachusetts civil rights law.

The trial judge, J. Harold Flannery, shared her outrage, ruling in July 1993 that Heller's collages were "nothing more



than a reduction of Bowman to a sexual object and an attack on her as a woman, rather than as a political candidate." Moreover, they "clearly created an 'intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive work environment,' " meeting the conditions for sexual harassment under the Massachusetts code. Concluding that "[t]he kind of gross, personal, and pornographic attack that the photocopies represent is well outside the bounds of decency in a civilized society," the judge awarded Bowman \$35,000—considerably less than she had asked for, but about a year's salary for a mid-level social worker.

Heller appealed, arguing that when Bowman ran for union office, she became a fair target. Offensive as his artwork may have been, he claimed it was protected speech. Not so, said the SJC. By a 5-2 majority, the court ruled that Bowman's candidacy did not make her a public figure, nor did the union election have any more controversy than "the usual election of a president of a social club or ... the governing body of a condominium association." So Heller's speech was not entitled to constitutional protection, and the court concluded that its decision would not have a chilling effect on free speech.

Whether or not the Supreme Court hears the case, the issues it raises won't quietly slip away, since loutish behavior and lewd pictures seldom leave anyone dispassionate. Stories and editorials arguing both sides of the case have appeared in *The Boston Globe* and *The Wall Street Journal*, and when the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith held a public forum to discuss the case, so many people showed up that some had to be turned away. Spirited amicus briefs were filed on Bowman's behalf by the hotel workers union and seven civil rights groups, including the Women's Bar Association of Massachusetts, the National Conference of Black Lawyers, and Gay and

Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD). Weighing in to support Heller were the publisher of *Penthouse*, the National Writer's Union, and two other free speech groups. Feminists for Free Expression (a group with which I am involved) took neither side, but asked the court to reexamine the "hostile work environment" theory of sexual harassment. All of which goes to show, yet again, that speech and sex debates make for some pretty unlikely alignments.

At one end of the dispute are those revolted by what they see as an extreme, though not unique, example of the insults women encounter at work and elsewhere. These people want to punish the insulter and make the offensive behavior stop. At the other end are those worried about what happens when you make words or pictures the scapegoats for social injustices. To protect free speech for all, they're willing to tolerate expression that is nasty, adolescent or just plain dumb.

Regardless of where one stands, simple kindness argues for some sympathy for Sylvia Bowman; someone she had to work with set out to humiliate her and succeeded. She responded, her advocates argue, as would the "reasonable person" that the law proposes as a barometer: She assumed that Heller's sexual ridicule would interfere with her ability to work with her colleagues, and would encourage more ridicule and perhaps even violence. That "reasonable" response is notoriously tricky to pin down, though, since one person's "reasonable" is another's "uptight" and a third's "way-too-lenient."

Then, too, sexual harassment takes place within a context, and the context here was a political campaign of some prominence. Bowman's lawyers point out that union elections are not anything-goes affairs. Still, labor law and our political culture, despite the limits they impose, suggest that one of the prerequisites for running for office might be a thick skin. SJC Justice Joseph Nolan argues in his dissenting opinion that outrageousness of expression is a dangerous standard to impose on a union election. The U.S. Supreme Court thought it enough of a danger in most political and social discourse to tuck parody of public figures—even parody "calculated to injure"—securely under the First Amendment's mantle in its 1988 *Hustler v. Falwell* ruling. Heller's collages, mocking Bowman's appearance and age, were hardly examples of sophisticated political satire. But, his briefs insist, parody doesn't have to be clever or articulate or even mildly intelligent; it is, by its nature, a reductive form of self-expression.

The problem is that we're not really talking about dirty politics, but about what Marcia Pally, president of Feminists for Free Expression, calls that "special shimmer that supposedly accompanies sex." Would the response have been the same if Heller, instead of going to *Penthouse*, had tried *Soldier of Fortune* and come up with photos of storm troopers? Or if the body he attached Bowman's head to was that of a little girl in a tutu and pink tights? The first image would have been as hurtful and incendiary as the ones he used, the

second as physically derisive.

But Heller's pictures were sexual, and we talk about sex at a fever pitch these days, as if we can't imagine anything more damaging. We can't, it seems, even agree on what language to use. The Heller brief speaks blandly of 'caricature' and 'graphic utterance.' Bowman's briefs castigate "sexually derogatory fighting words" and "pornographic attack." Though it's unclear what the latter term might mean, it's a convenient call to arms because pornography itself is so ill-defined. Civil liberties attorney Marjorie Heins describes it as "anything with sexual content that you disapprove of." For all that, no one is equating Heller's collages with obscenity, which is one of the few categories of speech beyond the First Amendment's reach.

A fairly widespread body of feminist thought holds that sexually derogatory expression should fall outside the First Amendment. When that thinking is applied to sexual harassment policy, it creates a confusion that is, at least in part, semantic, because that pesky little "sex" can mean more than one thing.

The federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission guidelines, on which Massachusetts and much other anti-discrimination law is based, define two types of sexual harassment. One type is gender discrimination, that is, discrimination against women because they are women, covering such clearly discriminatory acts as assault, threats, unwanted touching and quid pro quo bargains, as in, "Sleep with me or lose your job." The other type of sexual harassment involves the presence of sexuality in the workplace, usually in the form of words or images, which are said to create an environment so abusive as to constitute discrimination. This category, known as "hostile environment" harassment, has included such things as pinups of nude women and a co-worker reading *Playboy* on a break. It is here that the conflict arises.

The "hostile environment" theory gained prominence with Catharine MacKinnon, who included it in her successful argument in the 1986 case of *Meritor Bank v. Vinson*, the first sexual harassment case heard by the Supreme Court. The idea was refined in 1993 in *Harris v. Forklift Systems*, where the Supreme Court accepted the concept of "hostile work environment," but was unable to come up with a definitive standard. Instead, it stressed the need to look at the overall context in which the harassment took place and to weigh factors such as the presence of physical threat or humiliation.

Though speech figured in both cases (and more prominently, in two recent lower court cases, *Johnson v. County of Los Angeles Fire Department* and *Robinson v. Jacksonville Shipyards*), Burt Joseph, a Chicago-based First Amendment lawyer involved in *Johnson*, points out that there has never been a sexual harassment case based on speech alone that has trumped the First Amendment.

Still, the line between speech and action is not always clear, and the idea that an image can harass has legs. It has swept in its wake objections to everything from serv-

ing a customer reading *Playboy* in a restaurant to teaching in a classroom with a picture of a nude on a wall. (In the last instance, as if to prove that intolerance is a boomerang, a professor who demanded that a reproduction of Goya's *Nude Maja* be removed from the room she taught in was subsequently charged with sexual harassment over a book about representations of a female figure she used in her teaching.)

We live in heavy-hearted times, when workable solutions seem more and more to escape our grasp. So it is tempting to think that by banning a picture, we are fighting inequality. But if the purpose of sexual harassment policy is to ensure that women can earn their living and advance in their work without interference because they are women, it's hard to see how attacking sexual imagery could help.

And the costs of such a strategy are not inconsiderable. For starters, the premises of the strategy are at once too narrow—implying that all the bad things that happen to women at work have to do with sex—and too broad—assuming that sexual expression in itself is oppressive and harmful to all women. Women are disproportionately victims of sexual assault, but words and pictures are not rape; and despite claims to the contrary, there is no credible scientific evidence that they lead to violence either.

The idea that women might need to be protected from sexual pictures, jokes or innuendo serves to help perpetuate the notion that women are helpless, fragile and childlike. Throughout America's history, as Nadine Strossen and

other feminist defenders of free speech have argued, women have been barred from jobs, kept from serving on juries, excluded from trade and professional schools, and denied information about topics crucial to their well-being—all in the name of shielding them from morally or physically "hostile environments."

To enshrine the shrinking violet standard in anti-discrimination law is not only misguided, but also counterproductive. It confuses a policing action with a political one, and it narrowly focuses efforts to establish gender justice on words and pictures, rather than actions and policies, which is where real change occurs.

The urge to outrage, shock or bully is a remarkably resilient one. Still, there is a big difference between condemning Heller's expression and criminalizing it, and in that distance one can begin to imagine other, more effective responses. Why wasn't it equally reasonable to expect Bowman's co-workers to shame Heller for his actions and make their workplace hostile to him instead?

Speech is powerful—that's why we argue about it. Sometimes it's the only power available to the marginalized. No one really benefits when we scapegoat unpleasant words for the problems of a broader society, perhaps women battling discrimination least of all. ◀

Nan Levinson is a member of Feminists for Free Expression and the U.S. Correspondent for *Index on Censorship*. She lives in Boston.

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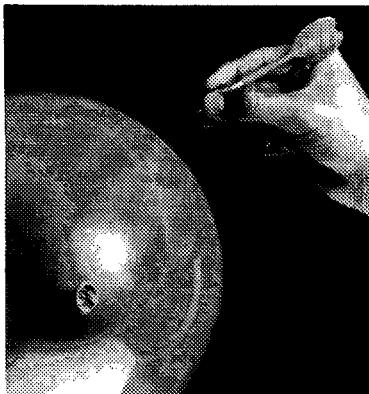
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I N T H E A R T S

Immaterial girl

As I watched Disney's *Pocahontas*, thrilling to satirical songs about Englishmen raping the New World and heartfelt paeans to a simple life devoid of materialism, a detail nagged at me. Pocahontas' canoe looked oddly stubby in her streamlined cartoon world, a design at once illogical and yet familiar.

The real Pocahontas isn't the point in Disney's latest animated epic.

By Pat Dowell

Then it hit me. Our heroine's craft looked less like a canoe than a vessel used in log-flume rides at waterparks. Of course. The whitewater raft ride of Pocahontas, the scene accompanying the song "Just Around the Riverbend," is a ready-made attraction for Disneyland and Walt Disney World.

Every Disney production is a merchandising juggernaut, and Americans seem to have forgotten what it means to get angry about the transformation of culture's every corner into a

marketplace. *Pocahontas* has the added gall to vaunt the anti-materialistic values of its heroine. The song that will surely win an Oscar next March, "Colors of the Wind," extols the virtues of never asking what things are worth.

Still, in spite of such blatant hypocrisy, I almost feel a little sorry for Walt Disney Pictures, trying sooooo hard to be politically correct in *Pocahontas* while at the same time grabbing your dollars. Ironically, all they've likely done is to make sure Bob Dole will attack them for their disrespect of the British settlers of America, whom the movie portrays as a colonial version of Captain Hook and his pirates.

Disney makes a brazen stab at multiculturalism and revisionist history in fictionalizing the 1607 incident in which young Pocahontas rescued John Smith from execution by her father Powhatan (voiced by, say it ain't so, American Indian activist Russell Means). *Pocahontas* depicts Native American society as a full-fledged community—a radical point of view, even today, in American movies—disrupted when a company of English adventurers arrive and claim the "wilderness" and its treasures for themselves and their king.

Pocahontas is a sort of indigenous, quasi-feminist corrective to the classic Disney heroine Snow White. She is dark-skinned, and her features are nonwhite. She is resourceful, wise and brave, and her prince needs her to awaken him, metaphorically speaking, to the ideals of peace and brotherhood—not the other way around. And ethnic prejudice is colorfully condemned in a Broadway-style musical production number that finds both Powhatan braves and the Englishmen stoking themselves up for battle with condemnations of their adversaries' savagery. Pocahontas puts a stop to that. It's Political Correctness, Disney-style, with history literally rendered cartoonish.

No matter how hard they huff and they puff, however, the Disney animators can't really blow their old house down. All those decades of transforming everything with the fairy dust of cuddliness hold them in a spell as complete as anything Snow White experienced. The look of this Disney animated film is a little less kitschy than the studio's recent epics, but what it boils down to is actually less eye-catching: subdued and vaguer back-



Pocahontas
Directed by Mike Gabriel
and Eric Goldberg



grounds, especially in long shots of the primeval American woodland, and no talking animals. A raccoon, a hummingbird and a prissy pug dog provide comic relief from the humans, who have always been Disney's weak spot.

In *Pocahontas*, as in every other Disney movie, only the most exaggerated homo sapiens live and breathe, in this case the Englishmen who serve as villains. The boys from Jamestown get the big production numbers too, the best of which establishes them as, yes, imperialists and pillagers of the land, mowing down trees, digging for gold, itching to kill the natives if they can't tame them.

There are times, considering the genocide to come on these shores (especially on the Eastern seaboard), when this sanitized, unruffled and ultimately cheerful version of first contact, with its reassuring reconciliation of Indian and settler, begins to seem almost giddily tasteless—the Disney version of *Springtime for Hitler*, if you remember the monumentally offensive musical staged in Mel Brooks' *The Producers*.

In Brooks' satire, the lyrical valentine to the Führer was expected to lose big money. *Pocahontas* is not. Even if ticket sales are not up to the returns on *The Lion King* (there is industry speculation that this is a "girl" movie), there's the already successful licensing to corporate partners such as Burger King (expecting to give away 55 million *Pocahontas* toy figures and to increase its sales 50 percent), Nestlé (selling Crunch bars with scenes molded in chocolate), and Pay-Less Shoes (offering moccasins, naturally). Mattel is making 51 separate toys for the occasion.

Most of the tie-ins are aimed at girls: dolls, dresses, tea sets, purses, jewelry. Boys are supposed to identify with manly John Smith (voiced by Mel Gibson) and buy armor,

guns, compasses, and "action figures." The traditional merchandising should be enough to convince anyone that *Pocahontas* is doing business at pretty much the same old stand, as far as women are concerned.

True, Pocahontas (with Native American Irene Bedard as her speaking voice) resists marriage to a granite-faced warrior of her father's choosing. While she anticipates a new destiny just around the riverbend, her new world turns out to be another man, John Smith. By increasing her age from the historical twelve to that of a consenting adult, Disney manages to take all that was mysterious and wonderful out of her intervention on Smith's behalf and instead gives her the oldest feminine motive of all—love.

The most radical thing she does is refuse to follow her man to England at the end of the movie. ("My responsibility is here," she tells him.) But in fact, the historical Pocahontas did end up across the sea. Taken hostage by the Jamestown gang, she became a political pawn in their war with the Powhatan tribe. Colonist John Rolfe asked for permission to marry her, and her father consented (history is a little hazy on her feelings in the matter). With their son, she and Rolfe toured England, where she died of smallpox, it is believed, at the age of 22. Nothing so mundane or uninspiring is included in the movie.

So, enough about history—in keeping with the Disney spirit, let's get to the bottom line. Thumbs up or down? Well, considered merely as a consumable, *Pocahontas* is less thrilling than *The Lion King* or *Beauty and the Beast*, but it is a cut above *Aladdin*. Like most Disney products, *Pocahontas* can be fun for consumers of a certain age. It's okay for adults who can sort out fact from fantasy in matters of history and gender, but it's hardly fit for children. ◀

I N P R I N T

The people, maybe

By Leo P. Ribuffo

Several decades ago the question of "populism" was central to serious discussion of 20th-century American history and politics. Starting in the early 1950s, leading liberal intellectuals, including Richard Hofstadter, Daniel Bell, and Seymour Martin Lipset, maintained that the agrarian rebels who coalesced in the People's Party of the 1890s were practitioners of irrational "status politics," advocates of groundless conspiracy theories, and proponents of vicious anti-Semitism. Furthermore, the (large P) Populism of the People's Party was the fount of worse (small p) populisms to come: the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s, the listeners of Father Charles Coughlin's radio broadcasts during the Great Depression, Senator Joseph McCarthy's "extremist" following in the 1950s, and the Republican "radical right" that nominated Senator Barry Goldwater for president in 1964. This interpretation not only dominated "consensus" historiography and "pluralist" social science, but also reached a general audience through Bell's famous anthology, *The Radical Right*, and Hofstadter's classic essay on the "paranoid style" in American politics.

As early as 1959, historian C. Vann Woodward suggested that the emphasis on the dark side of both "Populism" and "populism" reflected a deep disenchantment with "the people" among formerly radical intellectuals who had come to embrace the vital center. In the following decades, a number of works, including political scientist Michael Rogin's *The Intellectuals and McCarthy* (1967) and my own *The Old Christian Right* (1983), further argued that Hofstadter and others of his persuasion had refused to take the—admittedly odd—ideas of the populists seriously and had preferred psychoanalytical labels to political or moral argument. Yet none who argued for a renewed appreciation of populist history denied the existence of a dark side.

By the mid-1970s, however, the broad controversy over populism was not so much resolved as it was replaced by a new debate. Instead of arguing whether farmers in the People's Party prefigured Joe McCarthy, those in the ascendant

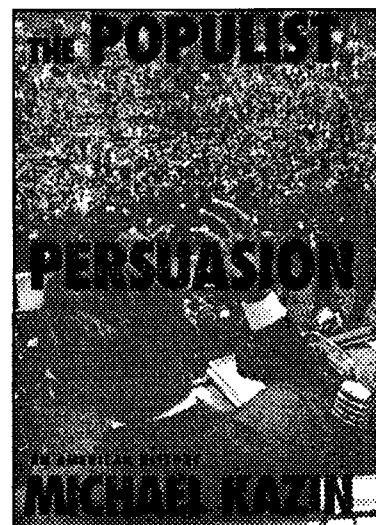
academic left wondered whether populists of the past might have become solid socialists if only they had plowed less and read more. Outside the academy, the debate took a different turn, as pundits continued to apply the label "populist" to angry white people who spoke with drawls, twangs, or any other unpolished accent. And references to "extremism," the "radical right," and the "paranoid style" persisted in the news media as handy substitutes for thought about social dissidents difficult to pin down.

Now, in his thoughtful new book, Michael Kazin, a professor of history at American University, argues that the question of populism is central to an understanding of 20th-century American history and politics. While acknowledging—and documenting—the debasement of the term in public discourse, Kazin suggests that there is such a thing as a real, definable American populism, which he describes as a "flexible mode of persuasion" that has over the years found resonance among millions of Americans. To illustrate the point, he offers an interrelated series of essays on populist movements—right and left—from the late 19th century to the present.

According to Kazin's sensible working definition, small p populism involves more than the celebration of the common people and the vilification of elites. In addition, populist movements typically venerate the United States as a special place and affirm the "producer ethic" of hard-working ordinary folk against the lazy parasitism of the elites.

Kazin uses populism as a vehicle for studying the broader range of American politics. After a brief backward glance at the early years of the Republic, he begins his history in earnest with the emergence of the People's Party in the 1890s. The "grand coalition of outsiders" that filled the party offered both a moral and an economic critique of American society. Despite the perceptions of historians in the Hofstadter tradition, the large P Populists were no more bigoted or irrational than their opponents.

After the People's Party's alliance with the Democrats and the overwhelming defeat of the united parties in 1896, the moral and economic strains of populism began to diverge. During the so-called Progressive era before World War I, the economic critique of the



The Populist Persuasion:
An American History
By Michael Kazin
Basic Books
381 pp., \$24

Populists was appropriated and adapted by the American Federation of Labor, while the quest for moral regeneration fell to a largely Protestant coalition fighting for Prohibition.

Seeking greater affluence for its members rather than basic changes in American values or social structure, the AFL reached a peak of influence during World War I. In the 1920s, however, membership steadily declined as constituent unions lost strike after strike. The prohibitionists' victory proved temporary as well. In practice, Prohibition proved something of a joke; enforcement was lax and violations commonplace. By the late 1920s, the temperance coalition had unraveled, and defense of Prohibition was increasingly marked by Klanish nativism. Ultimately, movie stars and efficiency experts were stronger symbols of the emerging era than devout Protestants and craft unionists.

The Great Depression, too, brought a new and different mix of rival populisms. On the left, populism within the Congress of Industrial Organizations encompassed radical ideologues as well as relatively apolitical workers who simply went along with unionization to improve their own standard of living. On the right, Kazin focuses on Father Coughlin as the Depression era's prototypical reactionary populist.

Kazin understands, however, that the anti-Semitic priest's invocations of faith, family, work and country would not have sounded alien at many CIO locals. Despite their fierce battles over specific issues, most of the rank-and-file left and right shared underlying "American" values. President Roosevelt understood that as well. Kazin does not say so, perhaps because liberal country squires make odd-looking populists, but his own evidence suggests that FDR held together a querulous coalition by harking back to populist-style moralism in his speeches and in the symbolism of the New Deal.

The New Deal coalition was shaken in the 1940s and '50s, as populism began what Kazin calls a "migration" to the right. Conservative cold warriors not only accused their centrist counterparts of being soft on Communism, but also attributed this flaccidity to the influence of cosmopolitan elitists like Alger Hiss and Dean Acheson. Once again faced with a variety of right-wing populists to illustrate the point, Kazin inevitably focuses on Joseph McCarthy, the senator who became an "ism."

Skeptical of comforting folklore, Kazin views the 1960s as a polarized era rather than a radical era. (And there is not much doubt as to who had the upper hand.) But Kazin is not immune to wishful thinking himself. In a bland and unconvincing chapter, Kazin describes the New Left as a populist movement, albeit a "rarefied" one composed primarily of affluent students.

Yet the populisms of Barry Goldwater and George Wallace proved far more significant. And much as FDR dominated the polarized '30s, Richard Nixon hovers over the polarized '60s, borrowing from Goldwater and co-opting Wallace to build a conservative coalition strong enough to survive Watergate. Nixon's evocation of the hard-working

"silent majority" and Agnew's denunciations of "effete" intellectual snobs recalled the populist celebration of the producer ethic.

The electorate, in other words, began moving right in 1968, not 1980 or 1994. In Kazin's account, the past quarter century looks like an anticlimax, and he moves quickly through the grassroots controversies over busing, the creation of the New Christian Right, Reagan's expansion of the Nixon coalition, Ross Perot's billionaire populism, and Bill Clinton's journey (symbolic of many on the left) to "political realism." Today, Kazin concludes, there is no left populist movement, though some on the left have maneuvered to substitute the description "populist" for the embarrassing label "liberal."

Although most of this story is familiar, Kazin tells it with verve, and draws intelligently from the latest scholarship on the movements he covers. Unlike the pluralist sociologists and consensus historians who contributed to *The Radical Right*, Kazin shuns psychological reductionism and pays close attention to language—even language that sounds odd in retrospect. He is also concerned with race, gender, and sexuality, noting, for example, the People's Party's limited alliance with African-Americans, the CIO's celebration of moms and movie stars rather than Rosie the Riveter, and the homophobic aspects of McCarthyism.

Despite the multicultural motifs, which mesh neatly with current historiographical trends, the book's central and ostensibly revisionist theme—that populism can be sour as well as sweet—is more than four decades old. But Kazin's resurrection (he would probably say adaptation) of ideas from consensus historiography gives the book a significance beyond the topic at hand. Indeed, it may signal a wider willingness to reconsider some of our current historiographical clichés by bringing to bear the forgotten insights of consensus historians that were perhaps too easily dismissed by New Left historians of the '60s.

Kazin writes as a public intellectual and former SDS activist who "agonized" and puzzled over the collapse of the left and the rise of the Reaganite right. He is not alone. Lately, a few scholars on the left have noticed the electorate's trend rightward and have begun to explore the historical antecedents. Still, most of the intellectual left remains content to explain away political and cultural conservatism as manifestations of American "racism," "sexism," and "capitalist hegemony"—buzz words now applied as glibly as "radical right" and "status anxiety" were used in the '50s.

The Populist Persuasion stands out, not only because Kazin works hard to reveal the texture of populism on the right, but also because he comes close to acknowledging that the United States is basically a conservative country. That judgment, though usually associated with '50s consensus historians and pluralist social scientists, was not unique to them. Indeed, it was shared by some of their wisest contemporaries on the left, including C. Wright Mills, William Appleman Williams and Warren Susman. Unfortunately,

this perspective has been lost beneath two decades of historiographical positive thinking and proliferating monographs affectionately examining left lost causes that would have triumphed if only. . . .

Conversely, even Kazin's populisms of the left look pretty conservative. He is under no illusion, for example, that the CIO rank-and-file would have created a labor party if only they had welded less and read more. Moreover, although the People's Party and the AFL-CIO represented the interests of relatively poor farmers or workers, they did not purport to speak only for deprived classes. On the contrary, while recognizing in practice that some sorts of people were more likely than others to support them, these movements claimed to speak for *everybody* except a tiny and imprecisely defined elite. Although the populisms Kazin analyzes were often in practice quite provincial, they dreamed of building grand coalitions across class, regional, and sometimes racial lines. Thus, they were more susceptible to co-optation—but also more likely to win some victories—than rigorous socialists whose rhetoric of class conflict sounded less American.

In one sense, at least, American populist movements have been even more conservative than Kazin implies. Not only do they speak loosely of coalitions across class lines, but even the most left-wing populists have typically been nationalist in orientation. For example, in one of his best but least appreciated books, *The Roots of the Modern American*

Empire (1969), William Appleman Williams suggested how deeply the People's Party was enmeshed in the expansionist consensus of the 1890s, joining urbanites and corporate capitalists in urging the conquest of foreign markets and the removal of Cuba from Spanish control. Nor should historians be surprised that even the most angry citizens of a powerful and relatively isolated country usually embrace prevailing patriotic norms.

One reason the New Left fits so awkwardly into this book is that—for good and ill—it rejected that nationalist tradition. On the one hand, as Kazin writes, the New Left “tried hard to look America straight in the face and confront its wrenching passions of race, sexuality, violence, and egoism—all displayed on the international stage.” On the other hand, the New Left critique required *de facto* repudiation of what most American people believed, going as far as to suggest the emulation of the purported utopias of China, Cuba, and Vietnam. Kazin's inclusion of the New Left in the populist tradition represents a slide into unconvincing optimism.

Although he shrinks from following some of his arguments to their logical conclusions, Kazin tackles hard and painful questions. With a few more books like this one, the intellectual left may begin to work its way out of political fantasy land. ◀

Leo P. Ribuffo, a professor of history at George Washington University, is author of *Right Center Left: Essays in American History* (Rutgers, 1992). He is writing a history of the Carter administration.

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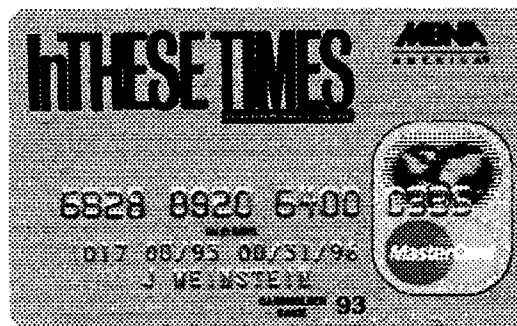
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War stories

By David Futrelle

Some writers seem to think that political writing consists entirely of the making of pronouncements. For them, the political essay is little more than a collection of stock phrases and exhortations delivered with deliberately mustered enthusiasm; political reporting is merely a collection of standard-issue conclusions with a few details thrown in as color commentary.

For Andrew Kopkind, a radical reporter and editor best known in recent years for his work at *The Nation*, writing was an ongoing experiment, an education for him as much as for his readers. In *The Thirty Years' Wars*, a posthumously published collection of his writing, one watches Kopkind sort through the complex and contradictory

impressions of a fast-moving world, trying to understand events rather than simply to pigeonhole them. The book is a delightfully variegated collection of think pieces and radical reportage, covering a span of three decades and topics ranging from the Vietnam war and the invasion of Czechoslovakia to the politics of the Village People, from the politics of SNCC and the riots in Newark to the sad lives of Jim and Tammy Fay Bakker. Kopkind immersed himself in the subjects he wrote about, teasing out their many contradictions and only with reluctance bringing his thoughts to some kind of closure.

Kopkind began his journalistic career at *Time* magazine in 1961, but Henry Luce's corporate Calvinism was not exactly his idea of paradise. Kopkind left *Time* to begin his career as a political reporter in earnest at the *New Republic* in 1965. Over the next few years, as the country's political life erupted and Kopkind's own horizons enlarged, he wrote in publications as varied as the *New York Times Magazine*, *Il Manifesto* and *Mayday*, a small newsletter he helped to found. He ended up at *The Nation* in 1983, where he stayed on to write and edit until his death in 1994, of cancer, at the age of 59.

In many ways, Kopkind was a reporter's reporter. He wrote clear, elegant prose with remarkably effective, memorable leads. He had an eye for detail, which is to say he knew which details to omit as well as which to include. Kopkind wasted no ink reiterating the things everyone already knew; he took them for granted and moved on from there. Writing about the Republican convention of 1968, he spent little time on the silly hats and floor demonstrations. "Nothing tangible or spiritual in this desolate sandpit resort holds hope for repairing a

wounded nation," he wrote, summing up not only that convention, but (with a few changes in detail) virtually every convention since then and indeed, virtually all the ones preceding.

Like most who have written on politics, Kopkind reads better as a critic than as an enthusiast. Many of his critiques—his careful demythologization of Robert Kennedy and his biting analysis of the contradictions of Martin Luther King, Jr., for example—are masterpieces of radical analysis, as relevant today as when they were first written. And no one who had read his critique

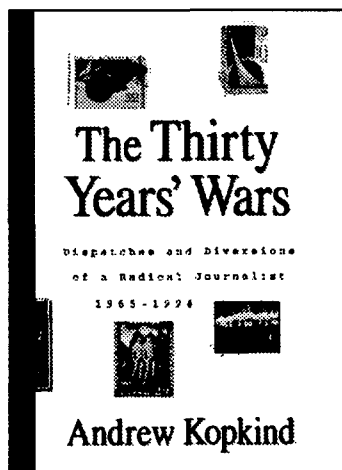


of the countercultural capitalism of the original Woodstock would have even considered trekking through the mud and the consumerist haze of the 1994 revival.

But the book also contains ample evidence of Kopkind's inevitable misreadings and mistakes, which almost always resulted from a surfeit of hope. Kopkind realized that one had to look beyond the immediately possible—to reject what radical sociologist C. Wright Mills called “crackpot realism”—in order to gain anything at all in politics. Unfortunately, he sometimes projected his political desires upon people and social forces that could not possibly live up to his expansive agenda—the Weathermen, the Black Panthers, Jesse Jackson—all of whom were too weak or fragile or too compromised by their own ideological wishful thinking to live up to such high hopes. (Or indeed, in the case of the Weathermen, any hopes at all.)

But Kopkind's enthusiasms were always tempered by realism, by an instinctive cynicism and a careful regard for the intransigence of power. “Whatever else may be going on in America, it is not very much of a revolution,” he wrote in 1968, just as vague apocalyptic talk began to fill the air and to addle the brains of formerly sensible New Leftists. “Despite some unruliness, a few perilous moments and a great deal of intramural bickering, the strongest fortresses of ‘the system’ remain in the hands of the same elites that have held power for years. ... The art of holding onto power is the American system's special grace.”

Indeed, with more subtlety and grace than Marcuse mustered in entire books on the same subject, Kopkind noted the ways in which the very existence of the counterculture showed how profoundly unrevolutionary the times really were. “To a society that is suffering from too much internalized repression already, the sale of vicarious liberation can bring a bonanza in cash returns,” he wrote. “The performing rebel is urged to tell it like it is and do his own thing—*pour épater les bourgeois*. Media fortunes will be made and broken on a company's ability to swing with the liberation movements. It is all proof enough that this is not a revolutionary situation; if it were, Tom Hayden wouldn't be on television, Country Joe and the Fish would be underground and Eldridge Cleaver would be shot.” New generations of radicals discover



The Thirty Years' Wars:
Dispatches and Diversions
of a Radical Journalist,
1965-1994

By Andrew Kopkind, edited
by JoAnn Wypijewski,
Verso, 531 pages, \$27.95

these insights anew every several years, holding them aloft as if they were freshly minted Truths.

Though much of the writing in this book comes from the years of tumultuous promise in the late '60s—approximately a third of the book is made up of articles written between 1967 and 1970—Kopkind was in some ways at his best in detailing the dispiriting (if practically inevitable) collapse of the left in the '70s.

“The topography of American political culture in this strangely suspended season is strewn with the skeletons of abandoned movements, lowered visions, dying dreams,” he wrote. “Ideologies based on mechanistic analyses of power and history may not be wrong, but they are seen as external to the lives of many whom they once moved, and irrelevant, too, to long-untended needs for peace of body, soul and mind.” He wrote with a certain critical sympathy of the political retreat of burned-out radicals into the world of self-help and countercultural mysticism in the '70s, recognizing the longing for meaning and fulfillment that lay behind the sometimes militantly apolitical impulses of the first of two “me” decades.

Kopkind realized that there was more to politics than the personal, but he also recognized the converse: that a politics extending no further than the ballot box (or the protest march) was as limited as the simulacrum of democracy that made up the vast and artificial party conventions he wrote about so acidly.

After many unhappy years in the closet—and an abortive attempt at a psychiatric “cure”—Kopkind came out as a gay man, writing eloquently and insightfully about the emerging politics of gay liberation in the early '70s. He was a keen observer of the cultural politics of gay America, tackling everything from the constricted comforts of New York's gay ghetto to the “Dialectic of Disco.” He did not, like some present-day cultural studies mavens, exaggerate the political importance of these seeming frivolities, but neither did he feel they should be kept in the closet.

Kopkind's writing is so disciplined, each phrase so carefully constructed, that the prologue to the book—an edited transcript of discussions he held with Tom Golga and Jean Stein—is refreshing in its very looseness. Here one gains a glimpse of the man behind the words, of the life that helped him to the insights he displayed on the page, of the hopes that kept him writing all those years after so much in the world and in his own country had gone so terribly wrong.

Kopkind was not as flamboyant a media personality as some of his contemporaries, and in some ways was never properly appreciated in his life (casual readers of *The Nation* tended to mix him up with Alexander Cockburn, with whom he sometimes shared a byline). Rereading his sardonic deconstruction of Clintonism from the election season of 1992, one realizes how much we could use him today. This collection is proof enough that Kopkind is a writer who deserves to be remembered—and reread—for a long time to come.

Local workers of the world

By David Roediger

A cartoon from the trade union press in 1921 perfectly captured the worldview of the leaders of the American Federation of Labor. Seeking status and prestige, but not political power, the AFL's leaders were apparently pleased to have "Labor" pictured in the backseat (alongside "Invention" and "Science") of an automobile representing progressive government. "Capital" drove with "Management" riding shotgun.

The AFL, under the post-World War I leadership of arch-trade unionist Samuel Gompers, thus pursued a vision of domestic and international affairs that was "corporatist" twice over. Deferential to the "drivers" of the national economy, the AFL at the same time supported a social order in which various groups could form a "corporate" coalition that could help steer the ship (or car) of state.

Historian Elizabeth McKillen shows, however, that labor had other historical alternatives at hand. In *Chicago Labor and the Quest for a Democratic Diplomacy*, she brilliantly reinvents both labor history and the history of foreign relations. Chicago had been one of the most vital centers of trade unionism in the world during World War I and its aftermath. The city had a strong tradition of craft unions, and in the immediate wake of the war, it was home to a growing contingent of federated and industrial organizations in mass production industries.

The local labor movement was powerful and relatively independent. The Chicago Federation of Labor (CFL), in which the city's labor organizations joined together, consistently and sometimes effectively sparred with the AFL leadership. The CFL sponsored the liveliest labor press this side of the IWW and sought to keep labor politics independent of the machinations of the Democratic and Republican parties. It once sent a majority female delegation to a postwar national labor party conference and further broke with the tradition of overwhelmingly male leadership within orga-

nized labor by pressing for a resolution to require all the party's policy-making committees to have equal numbers of women and men.

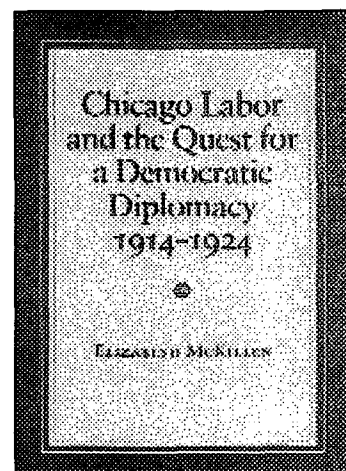
McKillen situates the maverick stance of the CFL within the global movement of workers, capital and young soldiers that dominated Chicago's history and the world's during this period. A significant number of the city's organized workers were committed to Irish nationalism, for example, and the CFL issued pronouncements against "British capitalists who are grinding down the Irish workers into subjection [and] the pro-British House of Morgan Company ... exploiting the workers of the United States."

The union sponsored meetings and resolutions on Polish self-determination, Indian independence, noninterference with the Soviet Union and the cause of "Mexico for Mexicans." Union officials—notably militant CFL leader John Fitzpatrick—developed a critique of corporatist foreign policy as undemocratic and imperialist. The real motives of policy makers, union leaders charged, were masked behind the "sham battles over fake issues" that guided public debate over foreign policy. While the AFL tended to equate internationalism with the expansion of U.S. markets and not to challenge the prerogatives of the federal government in foreign affairs, the CFL sought vigorous and substantive debate over diplomacy.

Unlike the Socialist Party and the IWW, the CFL stopped short of opposing World War I. But it did harbor doubts about the AFL's jingoism and the persecution of radical critics of the war. And direct, bitter experience with local war labor boards further soured Chicago unionists toward labor-business-government cooperation. CFL members, McKillen observes, eventually came to see "conflicts over war policy [as] an organic extension of local class struggles."

Chicago's Labor Party, initiated after the war by the CFL, soon became wrapped up in the very international issues that AFL conservatives—and later generations of labor historians—assumed should not preoccupy rank-and-file unionists. Following up on the failed Wilsonian promise of freedom for oppressed nations, ethnic Chicagoans in and out of the CFL redoubled their campaign for self-determination.

The Labor Party garnered only modest vote totals in the electoral hub-



Chicago Labor and the Quest for a Democratic Diplomacy, 1914-1924

By Elizabeth McKillen
Cornell University Press
256 pp., \$35

bub of postwar Chicago—where, as one observer put it at the time, “there are as many governments ... as there are nationalities, and ... there is no higher or central authority.” Yet the party did offer a valuable means of connecting particularistic ethnic concerns to broader questions of class and democratic debates over diplomacy. Chicago unionists and international activists developed a critique of corporatist foreign policy and the League of Nations (which they contended was both pro-British and pro-business) that was anything but “isolationist”—the term used to stigmatize most opponents of Wilsonian foreign policy initiatives.

By 1924, however, these efforts had largely ended in defeat. Developing a class-conscious democratic diplomacy in a city that was itself often torn by ethnic tensions proved a daunting task. The CFL’s long-standing support of Polish self-determination, for example, could be quickly forgotten when the federation also announced its support for noninterference with the Soviet Union, campaigned for relief and trade relations with Lenin’s government and appeared to favor the Soviets in conflicts with Poland. Similarly, rapid changes within the Irish and Mexican revolutions prompted quick and sometimes divisive revisions of policy positions, often on the basis of conflicting and partial information. The pragmatist process of democratic diplomacy inevitably produced tensions within the Labor Party’s multiethnic constituency.

Yet it was in its external dealings with national union leadership that the CFL suffered the most. The CFL took pains to

measure the degree of its dissent from AFL positions, especially when they allegedly involved questions of national security. Fitzpatrick didn’t sacrifice his ties to the AFL even when he was harshly critical of the national federation’s policies. Perhaps the CFL’s reticence in such matters stemmed from the perceived need to keep the AFL’s national influence intact in order for the local union to retain some clout in diplomatic issues. In pursuing national influence, union leaders also seemed at times to overreach their grasp, as when they pushed aggressively for the foundation of a national labor party in the early 1920s, rather than reinforcing the CFL/Labor Party’s support at the local and state levels.

Such difficulties raise vital questions for the structure of dynamic labor left movements today. Like the recent work of Staughton Lynd, Peter Rachleff and John Borsos on local labor movements and the Congress of Industrial Organizations in the 1930s, McKillen’s study suggests that local insurgencies paid a heavy price for being too closely aligned with national bodies. As *Quest for a Democratic Diplomacy* admirably demonstrates, “local” did not automatically mean “narrow” for earlier generations of union activists. Nor need it be so today, as all manner of progressives struggle with the meaning of thinking globally and acting locally in a world of nation-states. ◀

David Roediger teaches American history at the University of Minnesota. His most recent book is *The Abolition of Whiteness* (Verso, 1995).

SPEED READING

Professor Wellstone Goes to Washington

By Dennis J. McGrath and Dane Smith
University of Minnesota Press
292 pages, \$24.95 cloth, \$17.95 paper.

When Paul Wellstone narrowly defeated two-term GOP Senate fund-raising king Rudy Boschwitz in 1990, the press, including myself, cautiously labeled the campaign as a harbinger of a resurgence of progressive politics in reaction to a decade of Reagan-era tyranny.

In retrospect, that analysis seems pro forma and lacking intellectual rigor. It reflects a profound flaw in American journalism—the need to categorize often singular events as trends. As Paul Wellstone gears up to campaign for his second (and what he promises is his last) Senate term, it’s essential to understand his election in its proper context to analyze his chances of retaining his seat.

Unfortunately, *Senator Wellstone Goes to Washington*, an account of the 1990 campaign published five years after the fact, does little to provide that context. On paper, the book seems to promise valuable inside information. Dane Smith covered the 1990 Senatorial campaign for the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, while Dennis McGrath was allowed special access to the Wellstone team on the condition he

reveal nothing he experienced until after the campaign.

But largely because it dwells on the details of the campaign, the book develops a sort of tunnel vision and fails to present the election in the framework of Midwestern or national politics. Remember, in this same 1990 election Minnesotans dumped three-term Governor Rudy Perpich whose economic values were near mirror-images of Wellstone’s. Four years later, Minnesota voters elected Rod Grams, an ultraconservative freshman Republican Senator whose ideology is so contrary to Wellstone’s as to render them the oddest twosome in the Senate.

Indeed, Wellstone is looking more and more like an anomaly in the current political climate. He is fundamentally a big-spending, class-baiting, New Deal Democrat in an era when most of his party runs from those labels. His politics place him too far to the left to be influential in the Senate, so he continues what often seems to be a lonely fight.

Alas, McGrath and Smith don’t address Wellstone’s present dilemma. They also neglect a host of related, pressing questions: What drives a fickle electorate? What motivates contradictory electoral behavior? And what we can expect in 1996? In 1995, Wellstone is looking less like the great progressive hope and more like an outsider who happened to be a liberal. In this context, the 1990 senatorial election seems much less compelling—and renders the book’s five-year-old story something of a period piece.

—Adam Platt

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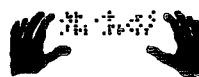
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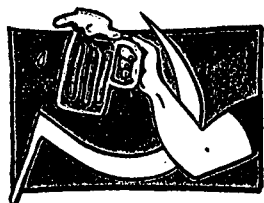
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He's often called "provocative." A habitual liar would be more accurate. Rush Limbaugh, the multimillionaire huckster who purports to speak for the little guy, doles out falsehoods, misinformation and bogus conspiracy theories on a daily basis.

Much of what Limbaugh says would be laughable if not for the millions of people who believe him when he claims that "the poorest people in America are better off than the mainstream families of Europe"; or that a university study proved that the bigger the bra size, the smaller a woman's I.Q.; or that "styrofoam and plastic jugs are biodegradable."

On and on it goes. Yet even more disturbing than his Limbicile statements is the fact that many media treat him as an authority. ABC's Ted Koppel presented Limbaugh as an "expert" on the environment and on Whitewater. Limbaugh recently dispensed his wisdom as a pundit on *This Week With David Brinkley*.

Limbaugh Gets Stung

Not long ago FAIR, the progressive media watch group, had a novel idea for a stinging rebuke to Rush Limbaugh — the truth. We published a report in *EXTRA!*, our award-winning magazine, that exposed Limbaugh as a charlatan.

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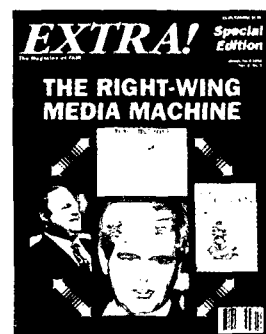
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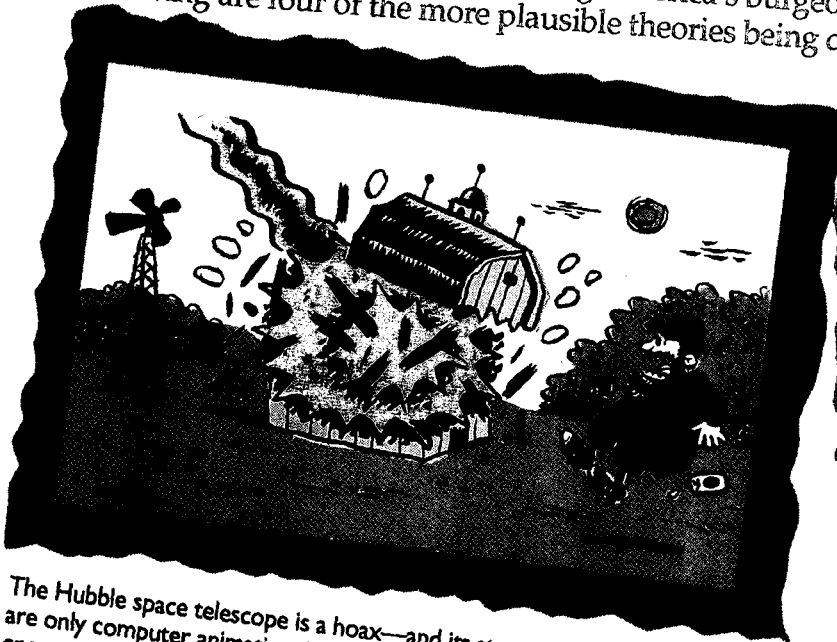


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Paranoid style

The hills are alive—and very wary. On a recent road trip through America's heartland this reporter searched out rural radio talk shows in order to document the latest conspiracy theories circulating among America's burgeoning militia movement. Following are four of the more plausible theories being disseminated.

By Woody Igou



The Hubble space telescope is a hoax—and its state-of-the-art "photographs" are only computer animation. Hubble's true purpose is to collect the sun's energy and beam it to earth in the form of powerful laser pulses. The lasers have been programmed to strike and vaporize weapons and ammunition legally stockpiled by militia members.



The shooting of Reagan Administration Press Secretary James Brady was faked. This massive conspiracy, led by former President Jimmy Carter, was a devious plot to abolish the right to bear arms. James Brady was not crippled. Videotapes of Brady playing touch football at the Trilateral Commission Picnic in Martha's Vineyard can be obtained for \$19.95 by dialing 1-800-737-0666.



Microwaves beamed from secret FCC transmission towers are being used to brainwash citizens into favoring gun control. Fortunately, a majority of congressional Republicans sport a stiff, thick hairstyle known as "helmet hair," which provides a natural defense against the microwave beams. This, in part, explains why the Republicans have successfully resisted gun control forces.



Interstate highways are the lifeblood of the federal government's war against its own citizens. As observed from space, the paths of all the interstate highways built since the forced resignation of Richard Nixon in 1975 form a distinct pattern. As citizens drive along the interstates, they subliminally absorb the pattern's message directly into their brains. This may also indicate the government's attempts to contact like-minded anti-gun alien cultures on other (probably red) planets.